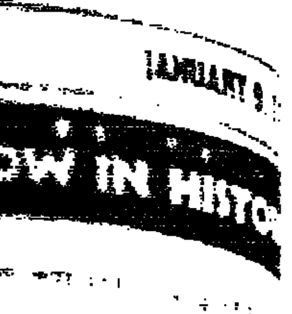




20 PAGES; PRICE 200 RIALS

VOL. XVIII; No. 237; THURSDAY JANUARY 16, 1997; DAY 27, 1375; RAMAZAN 6, 1417

France Issues New Warning to Belgrade

PARIS — France issued a new warning to Belgrade Wednesday of "serious consequences" if it does not recognize opposition election victories, one day after ballots were conceded in Serbia's capital and second city.

Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said in a letter to his Yugoslav counterpart Milan Milutinovic that Belgrade should immediately implement the recommendations of an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) report.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

China Accuses Taiwan of Treachery in Vatican Visit

BEIJING — China lashed out Wednesday at Taiwanese Vice President Lien Chan's high-profile meeting with Pope John Paul II and accused Taiwan of treachery towards the Chinese people.

"The Taiwan authorities are stepping up their activities in the international scene in an attempt to carry out their plot of splitting the motherland," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Mandela Attacks U.S., Hints Arms Deal With Syria May Go Ahead



MANDELA

JOHANNESBURG — President Nelson Mandela lashed out Wednesday at U.S. criticism of South Africa's proposed arms sale to Syria and hinted that the $641 million deal could go ahead no matter what Washington says.

"We will conclude agreements with any country, whether they are popular in the West or not, and that is what we are likely to do in this case," Mandela told reporters outside his Johannesburg home.

"No country in the world is going to dictate to South Africa what we decide upon," he said, without mentioning the United States by name. "What we decide upon is going to be determined by South African interests."

He added: "We do not necessarily share the values of other countries" — a reference to U.S. criticism of the proposed deal on grounds that Syria sponsors international terrorism.

Mandela reiterated, however, that the deal had not yet been finalized and that a Cabinet meeting on January 22 would decide "whether we will go ahead with that contract or not."

Again without explicitly referring to the United States, Mandela said countries that disagree with others on policy points should "use diplomatic channels ... don't rise to the mountaintop and dictate to other countries."

The United States on Tuesday described the sale as a "a very bad idea" and hinted that Washington could suspend aid to South Africa if it went ahead.

"We will never allow any support or assistance from any country, no matter how powerful it is, to dictate our foreign policy, or violate our sovereignty or undermine our pride," Mandela said.

South Africa is one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid and is due to get $118 million from Washington in 1997.

South Africa's choice of friends on the international scene — notably Iran, Libya and Cuba — has often raised U.S. hackles, but Mandela has shrugged this off, saying he will not abandon countries that supported the struggle against apartheid.

The latest plan to sell Tank-firing control systems to the Syrian Army has been widely criticized both in South Africa and overseas, notably by Israel and the United States.

(AFP)

Yaqub Khan Confers With Nateq Nouri, Velayati



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri stressed that foreign interference would only aggravate the crisis in Afghanistan and increase tension in that war-torn country.

Making the above statement during his meeting here on Wednesday with the visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister, Sahebzadeh Yaqub Khan, the Hojjatoleslam underlined that continuation of war in Afghanistan would have serious repercussions on the Muslim Afghan people and the neighboring countries.

Nateq Nouri further expressed concern over the regrettable continuation of conflict in Afghanistan, saying that the most appropriate solution to the Afghan crisis is unity and cooperation among all warring factions in that country.

Referring to the historical commonalities shared by Iran and Pakistan, the Majlis speaker described relations between the two countries as "good and cordial" and expressed hope that the two countries would boost bilateral ties in the near future. Hojjatoleslam Nateq Nouri also called for promotion of parliamentary relations between the two countries and thanked Pakistan for its relentless efforts to establish the Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Islamic countries. The Pakistani foreign minister, for his part, expressed satisfaction with strong ties between the two countries and noted that the exchange of high-ranking delegations in recent years indicates that the the two countries' officials are determined to consolidate bilateral relations and expand mutual cooperation.

In the meeting, Yaqub Khan also discussed the recent developments in his country with the Majlis speaker.

In another development here yesterday, the Pakistani official met Iranian Foreign Minister to discuss the issues of mutual interests as well as key regional and international developments.

Yaqub Khan called for establishing a "climate of confidence, mutual understanding and consensus" between Iran and Pakistan.

Pakistani minister called for "a broad governing coalition representing all the factions and communities" in Kabul.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati called for better coordination between Iran and Pakistan on the Afghanistan conflict.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahebzada Yaqub Khan arrived here Wednesday morning heading a delegation to discuss developments in the neighboring Afghanistan.

In an interview at the airport upon arrival, Yaqub Khan said developments in Afghanistan and ways to restore peace and tranquility in that country will be the main topics of his discussions with Ira-

(Contd on Pg.14)

Lebed, Communists lead Chorus Pressing for Yeltsin to Resign

MOSCOW — Popular retired General Alexander Lebed and communist chiefs led an opposition chorus pressing for Russian President Boris Yeltsin to resign on grounds of ill health Wednesday.

Lebed, who was Yeltsin's top national security advisor before being sacked in October, told German ZDF Television he had spoken to the Russian president Tuesday and advised him to resign if his health was preventing him from carrying out his duties.

"I have the firm intention of winning the gold medal in the next presidential elections," said Lebed, who came third in the first round of the June-July 1996 elections won by Yeltsin, 65, in a runoff vote.

In an interview published in the daily *Moskovskaya Pravda*, Lebed said: "They have tried to foist a pseudo-democracy on us, but the people will reject this falsehood."

Yeltsin's doctors announced Tuesday that they had noted a "marked improvement" in his condition, a week after he was hospitalized for what was revealed to be double pneumonia.

His readmission to hospital came just two months after he underwent a quintuple heart bypass operation.

Another major rival to Yeltsin, communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, Wednesday reiterated his call for a commission of medical experts to be set up to rule on Yeltsin's health.

Zyuganov, who lost to Yeltsin in the runoff vote, told reporters: "All we are asking for is to hear the conclusions of a medical commission on the health of the president, so that (Parliament) can adopt a constitutional decision."

Zyuganov charged that Yeltsin, who spent long periods away from the Kremlin in 1996, had "only worked for four months" last year, and had "only taken care of (electoral) promises and not car-

(Contd on Pg.14)

Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Condemn Al-Khalil Accord

DAMASCUS — Syria on Wednesday slammed the accord on the West Bank town of Al-Khalil as signalling the death knell for the Middle East peace process, while two Damascus-based groups accused Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat of giving in to the Israelis.

Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu struck the landmark deal at a summit on Wednesday extending Palestinian rule to the flashpoint West Bank city of Al-Khalil and beyond after three months of tough negotiations.

But Syria's official *Ath-Thawra* newspaper said: "Under the pretext of saving the peace process, they are in the process of burying what is left of it in the streets of Hebron (Al-Khalil)."

"The salvage operations underway are not really aimed at putting the peace process back on the rails but at saving the face of Israeli leaders and discharging them from the responsibility of having destroyed" international peace efforts, it said.

The Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), two PLO factions opposed to peace agreements with Israel, also hammered the deal.



"The accord represents a step backwards and a new concession by Arafat and imposes new security arrangements not contained in the Oslo accords (on Palestinian Autonomy) which benefit Israel," said PFLP spokesman Maher Taher.

(Contd on Pg.14)

Afghan Peace Plans Rejected by Taleban

KABUL — Talks in Pakistan aimed at establishing peace in Afghanistan have broken up without progress because the Taleban militia rejected demands made by its opponents, Taleban Information and Culture Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said Wednesday.

"The UN meeting ended without any particular result," as the anti-Taleban factions' representatives set the demilitarization of Kabul as one of their conditions, he said.

This was "not acceptable to the Taleban," the minister added.

The three-day meeting, under the auspices of the United Nations, brought together the alliance opposed to the Taleban and the Taleban militia itself, which captured Kabul on September 27.

At the Islamabad talks, the Taleban delegation led by Mollah Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil had proposed the formation of a joint commission made up of the Taleban and the groups opposed to it, in order to oversee a cease-fire and exchange of prisoners, Muttaqi said.

This was rejected by the anti-Taleban groups, he said, adding that another meeting would take place in February. He did not, however, specify the date nor venue for such a meeting.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

TEHRAN TIMES

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Printed at Keyhan

In the Name of God

The month of Ramazan is that in which the Qoran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction;

(HOLY QORAN) (2:185)

OPINION

Al-Khalil Agreement: Justifying Further Israeli Atrocities, Expansionism

After three months of incessant activities, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu finally succeeded in convincing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to agree to an accord on Al-Khalil (Hebron) Wednesday, which is mainly meant to ease international pressure on the Zionist regime without contributing much to a comprehensive peace in the region.

The agreement will be given lots of publicity by the Zionist regime due to delays in reaching it. Moreover, it is destined to add to the legitimacy of the peace process which, in effect, has serious structural drawbacks.

As a result of the Wednesday's agreement on Al-Khalil, the Zionist regime will be able to project itself as a peace-loving country whereas, in reality, such agreements will not bring about a real peace.

The Al-Khalil accord cannot lead to a lasting peace because there are a host of unsettled issues facing the Palestinians and Israel, the least important among which are the issues of Bait-ul-Muqaddas (Jerusalem), refugees, settlers, water, and the like.

If peace is to be comprehensive in the Middle East, solutions should be sought to some more serious issues remaining unsettled so far such as the occupied Arab territories including South Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

Israel's adamancy on the issue of Al-Khalil indeed constituted a violation of the accords already reached. Hence, the world public opinion should be aware of the fact that Israel's agreement to withdraw from most of Al-Khalil was a provision included in the accords previously signed by Israel.

Even if the Zionist regime implements the recently drawn up agreement, there is little prospect of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East so long as Israel refuses to return the occupied Arab territories.

It seems strange that the UN resolutions on the Middle East have fallen into oblivion while those concerning other countries like Iraq have been implemented verbatim. One reason is that the U.S. has practically hijacked the UN and transformed in into an instrument of achieving its own objectives.

Therefore the best remedy for establishing a lasting peace in the region is the implementation of all UN resolutions on the Middle East and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist regime from all occupied territories. Without complete return of all Palestinian refugees to their motherland, the compromise will not be just and not able to ensure a permanent peace in the region.

Moreover, Israeli officials should be tried as war criminals and on the grounds of violating human rights due to the atrocities they have committed against the innocent Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Any accord failing to meet the above requirements is doomed to failure.

Over 200 Iraqi Kurdish Refugees Return Home

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Governor of Piranshahr, Jebrael Imani, said on Wednesday that 208 Iraqi Kurdish refugees left the city in northwestern province of West Azerbaijan and returned to their homeland Tuesday afternoon.

Imani added that it was the fourth group of the Iraqi Kurdish refugees who left Iran via Piranshahr border under the supervision of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) during the past month, an IRNA report said.

This group of Iraqi Kurdish refugees had fled to Iran five years ago following the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war and were settled in different refugee camps in the cities of Orumiyeh, Oshnaviyeh and Naqadeh, he noted.

The cease-fire in northern Iraq has encouraged the Iraqi refugees to return to their homelands.

Thousands of Iraqi Kurdish refugees who fled to Iran after the Persian Gulf war, are still living in various refugee camps throughout the Islamic Republic's territory.

New Cases of Iraqi Cease-Fire Violations Reported to UN

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — In a letter to the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Iranian Permanent Representative to the UN reported 425 cases of cease-fire violations by Iraq.

According to an IRNA report from New York, the letter, which



KHARRAZI

was published Tuesday as a document of the Security Council, covers reports on cease-fire violations between July 5-September 9, 1996.

The cases of violations included repeated patrol of Iraqi boats in Arvand Roud, movement of Iraqi forces, vehicles, tanks and personnel carriers in the no man's land, infiltration of anti-revolutionary agents and smugglers from Iraqi territory to Iran, construction of bunkers and observation posts, shooting at Iranian territory and installing arms:

Several Iraqi smugglers aboard a boat in Hour al-Hovaizeh were intercepted by the Iranian Border Police and were forced to retreat into Iraqi territory under the heavy fire of the Iranian guards.

Five anti-revolutionary elements, armed with Kalashnikov rifles and RPG-7, fired at the security guards of the Paveh Radio and TV Station on July 21, 1996. When they were encountered by the guards, they retreated into Iraq, kidnapping a driver and his car belonging to the Paveh Agriculture Office, as well as a retired revolutionary guard.

They killed the guard at the Shahoo Heights close to the Iraqi border and set the car on fire. The fate of the driver is still unknown.

On July 23, 1996, the Iranian Border Police pursued five anti-revolutionary elements who had crossed the border into Iranian territory and entered the border village of Zarvar, Baneh District. As a result of the clash, one of the intruders, named Rahim Qaderzadeh, was killed and four others managed to escape back into the Iraqi territory.

The letter referred to at least 13 other cases of infiltration of anti-revolutionary elements and their clash with guardsmen. In some cases the anti-revolutionaries threatened and extorted the border villagers.

A number of Iraqi armed smugglers who positioned at Zahiriyeh marshlands, Hoveizeh District, were intercepted by Iranian Border Police and as a result five of them were wounded and another one was killed.

Later, the Border Police, guided by one of the detainees, in pursuing the smugglers destroyed a boat belonging to the smugglers and killed and wounded several others. The rest escaped into Iraqi territory.

Among the casualties was an Iraqi intelligence officer, identified as Ali Mazi. Mazi's deputy was among the smugglers and was hospitalized in Ahwaz.

Two other detainees are members of the so-called Khuzestan Liberation Front.

Also, Iraqi forces were seen to install heavy arms including anti-aircraft gun, construction of bunkers and observation posts in the no man's land.

Six Spies Arrested in W. Azarbaijan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The provincial director general for the Information Department of Orumiyeh, West Azarbaijan, said on Wednesday that six spies have been arrested in this northwestern province.

IRNA quoted the official as saying, "The spies who have been in contact with foreign countries through espionage networks have confessed to their charges," he added.

Those arrested have been providing foreign elements with political, economic and cultural information through films and pictures of strategic and military areas, and have been assisting these elements in their sabotage operations, the official added.

Security Prevails Over Country's Borders

TEHRAN — Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati here Wednesday expressed satisfaction with the security situation which prevails over the country's borders.

He stressed that the Law Enforcement Forces will strictly confront the wicked who want to disturb the security of the country.

Addressing the meeting of the special council for security of western parts of the country, Besharati said the security which prevails over the borders Iran shares with Iraq and Turkey points up the fact that the Islamic Republic is firmly determined to defend its territorial integrity.

Referring to Iran's cordial relations with its neighbors particularly Turkey, the interior minister stressed that holding fast to its foreign policy which rests on good neighborliness, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow other countries' opposition groups to use its soil.

He further averted that the Law



BESHARATI

Enforcement personnel in western parts of the country will firmly confront those who want to enter the country illicitly.

In conclusion, Besharati hailed the Law Enforcement Forces for their relentless efforts for preservation of the security throughout the country and said the county would be able to take further strides towards construction.

Company Denies Strike at Shiraz Oil Refinery

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The National Oil Product Distribution Company of Fars Province yesterday denied a foreign report on strike of workers at the Oil Refinery of Shiraz, an IRNA report said.

The Persian Section of the French Radio in a recent broadcast claimed that workers at the refinery went on strike on December 18 and 19 in protest at the abolition of some articles of the Collective Work Treaty which stipulated some bonuses for workers owing to their hard working conditions.

An informed source said that there were no strikes at the refinery on the days mentioned by the French Radio but on the contrary the overall performance of workers were much better than previous days.

He further added that workers at Shiraz Oil Refinery are given special bonuses with regard to their position and types of the work they are doing and that the Collective Work Treaty is implemented at the refinery.

Heroin Taken Out of Tanzanians' Stomachs

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Islamic Revolution Court of Kashan said on Wednesday that some 1.519 kg of heroin have been taken out of stomachs of two Tanzanian citizens in this central city.

According to an IRNA report from Kashan, Mahdavi Rouz added that the two Tanzanians were arrested two weeks ago.

The two had swallowed a total of 152 ten-gram packages of heroin, he said.

Nigerian Speaker Calls For Sharing Parliamentary Experiences With Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — In a meeting with Iranian charge d'affaires to Niger, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Niger Moutari Moussa expressed the willingness of the National Assembly of his country to benefit from the experience of the Majlis of Iran.

He said his government was ready to further develop relations with the Islamic Republic, IRNA reported from Niamey, Niger.

Iran's Mediation to Remove Greek-Turkish Tension Welcomed

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Greece welcomes the mediation efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to remove tension between Athens and Ankara, said Greek Press and Media Minister Dimitris Reppas on Tuesday.

The Greek minister made the remark in a meeting with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Athens, Mehdi Khandaqabadi, IRNA quoted Iranian Embassy sources as saying.

In the meeting the two sides discussed ways to expand media relations between the two countries and reviewed progress of bilateral relations.

The Iranian envoy extended Reppas an invitation to visit the Islamic Republic.

On Monday Khandaqabadi also met with Head of the Greek Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs, Karolos Papoulias, and discussed bilateral ties.

Papoulias also welcomed any Iranian efforts to reduce tensions between Greece and Turkey.

Papoulias, who served as foreign minister under the government of late Premier Andreas Papandreou, has visited the Islamic Republic several times.

Last month, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has said that Tehran would mediate between Greece and Turkey in an effort to reduce tensions between the two countries.

Velayati said he would send a delegation to Athens soon to review the issue.

Greek-Turkish tensions are once again high due to the decision by the Greek-Cypriot to purchase Russian anti-aircraft missile system, S-300.

Turkey has threatened to knock out the missiles if the Greek-Cypriot installed them on the divided island.

Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides after a meeting in Nicosia Monday with an American envoy said the missiles would not be deployed on the island in the next 16 months.

Carey Cavanaugh, director of the Southern European Department at the U.S. State Department, described Clerides' decision as an important step and a sign that this is not a crisis situation today. Cavanaugh met Greek Foreign Ministry officials in Athens Tuesday to discuss the missile issue.

Lebanese Minister Calls For Promotion of Tehran-Beirut Ties

Tehran Times Service

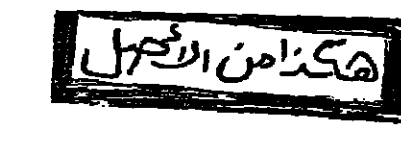
TEHRAN — Lebanese Minister of Defense Muhsin Dalloul, in Beirut Tuesday, underlined the need to further promotion of relations between Iran and Lebanon.

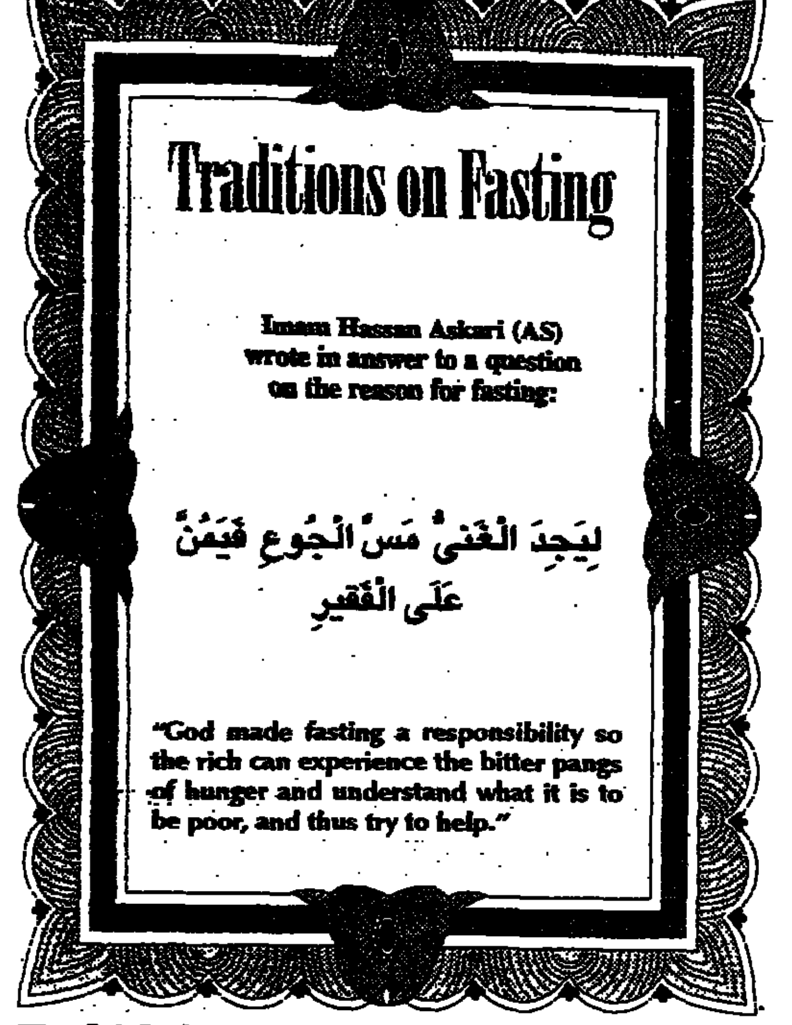
According to IRNA, he made the remark in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Beirut, Homayoun Alizadeh. In the meeting the two sides reviewed the latest regional developments.

Denouncing the Israeli hostile policies aimed at worsening the situation in Lebanon and in the whole region, Dalloul said Beirut is determined to continue the anti-Zionist struggle.

In a separate meeting on Tuesday Alizadeh exchanged views with Lebanese minister of public works and transport.

During the meeting the two officials discussed further expansion of Tehran-Beirut relations.





Pakistan Has to Revise its Policies

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Persian-language daily Jomhuri Eslami Wrote that there are every indication that Mrs Bhutto's government had a black record full of mistakes in relation with Afghanistan. The impudent support for the rebel grouplet Taliban created some catastrophes and consequently caused the fall of that government.

Mrs. Bhutto has admitted that in the past three years, Islamabad government has been carrying out the policies imposed by the US.

However, there has been no indication of Pakistan's revising its policy. As a rule, Mr. Yaqub Khan has not forgotten to which countries he has travelled to get recognition for the Taliban and to whom he has send messages.

Now, welcoming Mr. Sahebzada Yaqub Khan, it should be reminded that the Islamabad government has to revise its perilous policies in Afghanistan, give up interference in the country's internal affairs and change mind about supporting the Taliban, this rebellious and fanatic group.

What is the reason for Pakistan's being tempted to bring the US to Afghanistan and make efforts for turmoil there with the Saudi's finance and with the US plan?

Even if Pakistan is thinking about communication road to the Central Asia the way is not coming to terms with drug traffickers. Logically it is not in the interest of anyone if the US secures a foothold for itself as a political architect. Because it may well use that foothold for other plots against Pakistan and this time put a handful of traffickers in power in Pakistan!

Mr. Sahebzada Yaqub Khan knows well that the Taliban have reached the end of the line and it is not in the interest of Pakistan to invest more on those dud pawns. This is precisely why we call on him and his government to end interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

Another persian daily also wrote that if the minister has not come with a new attitude it will be difficult to imagine the talks would go beyond the diplomatic protocol.

The long-standing friendship between the Muslim Iranian and Pakistani nations necessitate more effective cooperation to find a political solution for the Afghanistan problem.

Iran can help Pakistan to extradite itself provided there is readiness on the part of the provisional government to accept the new realities.

Without recognition of such realities Pakistan would not be able to play a constructive role in Afghanistan. Moreover, it will not find the necessary political stability at home. Because Pakistan's national security has become linked to the Afghanistan developments to a great extent.

The continuation of the Afghanistan crisis would turn the balance of power in favor of the army in Pakistan. This is what veteran Yaqub Khan knows well.

Ramazan Day to Day Supplications

Sixth Day

اللّهُمَّ لاتَخْذُلْني فيهِ لِتَعَرُّضِ مَعْصِيَتِكَ وَ لا تَضْرِبْني بِسِياطِ نَقِمَتِكَ وَ زَحْزِحْني فيهِ مِنْ مُوجِباتِ سَخَطِكَ بِمَنِّكَ وَ أَيادِيكَ يا مُنْتَهى رَغْبَةِ الرّاغِبينَ

"O Allah, do not leave me alone to be overcome by sins. Grant me refuge from Your wrath and anger. I appeal to Your kindness and bounty; O the last refuge for those who crave for help."

Bonn, Tehran to Broaden Cooperation

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Minister of Construction Jihad, Gholam-Reza Forouzesh, during his visit to the Demotex Carpet Exhibition in Germany, conferred with the German agriculture minister on the two countries' possible areas of cooperation in agriculture, natural resources, livestock and fishery.

Forouzesh highlighted high potentials for cooperation between Tehran and Bonn and called for broad economic, agricultural and trade relations between Iran and Germany.

The German agriculture minister also stressed his country's interest in expanding and strengthening Tehran-Bonn technical and trade relations, and announced his country's readiness for all-out relations with Iran, especially in the field of agriculture, natural resources and livestock.

Turkish Central Bank Governor Supports Expansion of Trade Relations with Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Turkish Central Bank Governor, Qazi Archal, on Tuesday supported the increase in his country's trade relations with Iran and Iraq and stressed that expansion of these relations does not mean that Turkey is turning its face away from the West.

Qazi Archal, who was talking to Reuters, said Turkey plans to expand its trade relations not only with Iran, Iraq, and other regional countries but also with the U.S. and Europe.

He added that Turkish government intends to bring down the inflation in his country by implementing a three year program and that Turkey welcomes international support and granting of loan by the International Monetary Fund.

According to the Reuter report, Washington is concerned over Turkish growing relations with Iran, Iraq and Libya and is afraid let Turkey should turns away from the West.

American officials in meeting with Turkish officials have expressed dissatisfaction with the recent Turkey-Iran natural gas purchase agreement amounting to 23 billion dollars.

Turkish Central Bank Governor in his talk to American officials has said that Turkish trade relation with Iran is corresponding to its trade with European countries such as Italy and France and that the latter's export from Iran and import to Tehran is greater than that of Ankara.

Transportation of Kazakh Oil to Iran Via Caspian Starts Tentatively

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Tentative transportation of Kazakh oil to Iran via the Caspian Sea started, official in charge of National Iranian Oil Company's International Department, Hojjatollah Ghanimy Fard, told the Reuter.

According to a contract which has been signed between Tehran and Almaty, transportation of Kazkh oil to Iran via the Caspian sea should have been enforced by January 1, 1997. However, due to certain problems it begines tentatively.

Following its failure in isolating Iran, Washington is now concerned about the contract between Iran and Kazakistan.

Kazakistan has so far consigned 15,000 tons of crude oil to Iran, which according to the contract, the NIOC should deliver it to the buyers of the Kazakh oil, mainly the Persian Gulf littoral states.

Based on the contract, Kazakistan will annually deliver two million tons of crude oil to refineries in Tehran and Tabriz, and Iran is required to deliver the refined oil to the buyers.

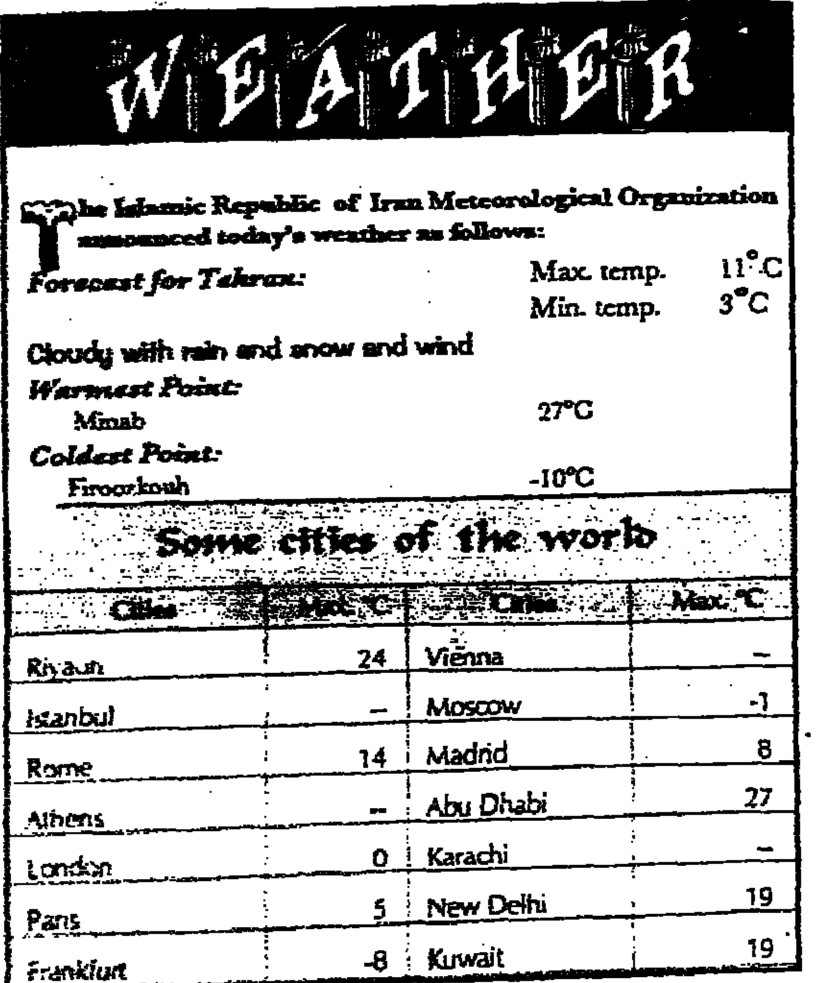
Customs Vague Standing in Economic Process

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of Iran Customs Administration, Abdolhossein Vahaji, said that the existing security has resulted in increased transit of goods in the country, IRNA quoted the Persian-language daily Salam as reporting.

Vahaji, who was in Arak, said on Monday that the amount of transit goods was 780,000 tones in 94-95, 2.2 m tones in 95-96 and 2.5 m tones in the nine months to Dec 20. 1996.

The customs official added that right now there is no correct understanding of the customs and its responsibility in the economic process.



WEATHER

The Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization announced today's weather as follows:

Forecast for Tehran: Max. temp. 11°C, Min. temp. 3°C

Cloudy with rain and snow and wind

Warmest Point: Minab 27°C

Coldest Point: Firoozkouh -10°C

Some cities of the world

Cities	Max. C	Cities	Max. C
Riyadh	24	Vienna	–
Istanbul	–	Moscow	-1
Rome	14	Madrid	8
Athens	–	Abu Dhabi	27
London	0	Karachi	–
Paris	5	New Delhi	19
Frankfurt	-8	Kuwait	19

President Inspects Tehran's Water Treatment Plant



Photo: Mojtaba Takin

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here Wednesday morning inspected a water treatment complex of Tehran sewage system, IRNA reported.

The principal goals of Tehran sewage system project is to collect household sewage and industrial wastewater, protect the environment, eliminate pollution, treat the wastewater for agriculture purposes and use resultant compost.

The southwestern section of phase one of Tehran sewage system will cost about Rls.159 billion of which Rls.52 billion has already been spent on designing and building the sewage network, the refinery house and on erecting a pipe-manufacturing plant for the purpose.

The water treatment unit of the sewage system will be south of the city of Ray, that is outside of Tehran city limits in the 25-year urban plan for the capital.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the president said the government would spend over Rls.120 billion on setting up Tehran's sewerage system. Over 80 percent of Tehran's wastewaters would be channelled to agriculture sector after treatment.

He said setting up of sewerage systems is underway in 110 Iranian cities and the officials in 100 other cities are studying to establish sewage works.

With commissioning of Tehran's sewage works, over 30,000 hectares of farmlands in southern Tehran would be provided with irrigation water, he said.

He said establishment of sewage disposal system is vital for protection of the environment.

He appreciated the officials in charge of building the sewerage systems.

Minister of Energy Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, also present at the ceremony, said his ministry has the technological know-how to build the sewage treatment centers in urban areas.

Australian Diplomat Calls For Upgrading Commercial Ties

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The outgoing Australian Ambassador here, Nicolas Warner, Wednesday reiterated Canberra's desire for further promotion of commercial ties with Tehran.

Meeting with Iranian head of Iran-Australia Joint Chamber of Commerce, Habibullah Asgar-Oladi, the Australian diplomat called for upgrading commercial exchanges between the two countries.

Asgar-Oladi underlined the role Australian diplomat has played in broadening Tehran-Canberra commercial ties and said that the volume of trade exchanges has increased and the chamber was active during the Warner's mission.

Asgar-Oladi said that the exchange of commercial delegations between the two countries will pave the way for expansion of trade cooperation. He further called for holding seminars to explore practical ways for upgrading commercial ties between Tehran and Canberra.

He expressed hope that the country's export of non-oil products would be increased by the next Iranian year beginning on March 21.

Referring to Iran's Second Five-Year Development Plan, Asgar-Oladi expressed hope that the development ideals of the country become materialized during the period.

Warner described activation of Iran-Australia Joint Chamber of Commerce as the main achievements of his mission to Iran and expressed hope that the chamber would help the two countries strengthen their commercial ties.

1.3bn Passengers Carried by Airlines in 1996

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Airlines carried nearly 1,350 million passengers and about 22 million tons of freight in 1996, says the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in a report released recently in Montreal (Canada).

The report, faxed yesterday from the UN Information Center here, further revealed that total traffic of the world's airlines in 1996 rose by 6 percent above that of 1995 in terms of ton-kilometers, and international traffic rose by 8 percent according to preliminary estimates.

The rise in airline traffic volume in percentages as above indicated also meant that passenger traffic, in terms of passenger-kilometers performed, rose by 7 percent in total and by 9 percent on international services, while freight traffic growth was lower, 5 percent in total ton-kilometers and 6 percent internationally, the report further said.

Capacity increases for passenger services continued to be kept in check, and average load factors rose slightly to reach 68 percent for total service and 69 percent for international services, level not previously achieved since 1990, the report concluded.

Six New Highways to Be Inaugurated Soon

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Six new highways, the total length of which estimated to be 5.5 kms, will be inaugurated in western Tehran, reducing the traffic jam there, it was announced here Wednesday.

According to a fax received by the daily from Ma'refat Cultural House, a sum of Rls.1,770 million has been spent for construciton of the highwasys.

The highways include: Noor Shomali, Mir Kamal, Elham, Ferdous, Siopanj-Metri Hawapeymaie and Siopanj-Metri Abazar Shomali.

It is noteworthy to mentione that the captial of the projects have been provided by the 5th district of Tehran Municipality.

Export of Non-Metallic Products on Rise

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Value of exports by production units supervised by the Department of Non-Metallic Industries at the Ministry of Industries between March and December totalled $750 million, showing 83 percent growth compared to the same figure over the preceding year, IRNA reported.

Deputy Industries Minister for Non-Metallic Industries Hossein Naji said here on Tuesday that major portion of the revenue, i.e. over $263 million, had been gained out of textiles and garments exports, while the least amount of it, i.e. about $six million by power and electronics industries.

Naji said that one billion dollars in credit had been allocated to his ministry in the first three quarters of the year, adding that the figure is expected to stand at about $1.25 billion by the year-end on March 20, 1997.

Iran Urged to Set Up Self-Employment Center in Tajikistan

TEHRAN — Tajik Labor and Employment Minister Shukurjon Zuhurov in a meeting with Iranian Labor and Social Affairs Minister Hossein Kamali called on Iran to set up a self-employment center and a vocational training center in his country.

Zuhurov called on the Iranian minister to provide necessary facilities for training of a number of Tajik nationals at Iran's technical and vocational training center.

He expressed hope that Tehran-Dushanbe ties would further expand in the area of employment and technical and vocational training once formerly reached agreements are implemented.

Kamali for his part said that his ministry was ready to boost mutual cooperation with Tajikistan. (IRNA)

Iran, Czech Republic to Promot Economic Relations

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Czech Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Pavel Dvorak Tuesday in Prague called for further expansion of Terhan-Prague relations particularly in the field of economics.

According to IRNA, he made the remark in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Prague, Jafar Hashemi.

Holding the second session of joint economic commission, progress made in the projects undertaken by Czech companies in Iran and upgrading of economic relations were raised in the meeting, Hashemi told IRNA correspondent in Prague.

Expressing satisfaction over holding exhibition of Iranian products in the Czech Republic, Dvorak stressed that these exhibitions help expansion of bilateral relations.

Iran-Azerbaijan Willing to Go Ahead With Agreements

BAKU, Republic of Azerbaijan — Iranian Ambassador to baku Alireza Bigdeli and Azerbaijan's Prime Minister Arthur Rasizadeh here Tuesday reviewed the ways and means for implemening recent agreements between Iran and that country.

The agreements between the two countries were arrived at during a recent visit to Baku of Iran's First Vice-President Hassan Habibi. They include a gas pipeline from Khoy of Iran to Jolfa on the border with Azerbaijan and a daim on the River Aras that forms a natural border between the two neighboring countries.

The Iranian ambassador and the prime minister of Azerbaijan also reviewed topics in connection with a projected sale to Azerbaijan of Iranian electicity, and mutual collaboration in the area of agriculture and trade.

The prime minister of Azerbaijan voiced the interest of his government to broaden relations with Iran and expressed hope that a projected visit to Tehran of Azerbaijani business and technical experts would pave the way for an early implementation of those greements. (IRNA)

612,000 Tons of Minerals Excavated in Shahroud

SHAHROUD, Semnan Prov.— A total of 612,000 tons of minerals were quarried from the local mines in the first three quarters of the year (March 20-December 20), said head of the local mines and metals office Seyyed Javad Dehmollaie here on Tuesday.

Dehmollaie put the value of the minerals, excavated from 21 active mines, at Rls.16.5 billion.

He said the minerals included 85,000 tons of coal, 2,100 tons of chromite, 15,000 tons of gypsum and 10,000 tons of limestone.

He added that there were nine coal, four chromite, four gypsum and two lime mines active in the city in northeastern Iran. (IRNA)

52 Tons of Goods Exported From Mazandaran to Central Asia

SARI, Mazandaran Prov. — Some 52,245 tons of commodities have been exported from this northern province of Iran to Central Asia in the first nine months of this year (started March 21), it was announced here on Wednesday.

According to Mohammad Abbasi, an official with Mazandaran Governorate, the value of the goods exported stood at Rls.40.6 billion, up 173 percent compared to similar period last year.

The commodities exported to the Central Asian countries included fruits, foodstuff, textile and household appliances. (IRNA)

Over 14,000 Tons of Goods Exported From Kerman

KERMAN — Export of some 14,720 tons of goods from this southeastern province during last month (November 21 - December 20) fetched Rls.91.679 billion.

Director General of Provincial Standard and Industrial Research Office Behzad Rowshan said here on Tuesday that the goods, including fig, date, macaroni, rose water, walnut, pistachio and grapefruit juice, were exported to Italy, Germany, taiwan, Central Asian republics, France, Russia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Britain, Denmark, Malaysia, Canada, Australia, Japan, Singapore and Lebanon.

In related news from Semnan, 86,777 tons of minerals, worth over $9,167,000, were exported in the first three quarters of the year.

The minerals included gypsum, salt, ferro silica, chromite and sodium sulphate.

The total sum of revenues gained through export of 59,500 tons of minerals from Semnan within the same period last year stood at $3.615 million. (IRNA)

Oil Prices Extend Losses as Inventories Recover

LONDON — Oil prices lost further ground on Tuesday after a sudden slump on Monday quashed speculation that crude might challenge recent post-Persian Gulf war highs.

London February futures for international benchmark North Sea Brent blend closed down 12 cents at 23.36 a barrel after an 83 cent slide on Monday stopped Brent short of its 25.06 high.

Oil analysts said that unless nature intervened again in the form of an unusually severe cold snap in key Western consumer markets, prices looked set for further declines toward spring in the northern hemisphere.

Prices won't collapse but from the second quarter on we will see a steady fall, said Geoff Pyne, energy economist at Finance House UBS.

I suspect we've seen the highs, said another London-based oil analyst. I think we'll see a slide, not a crash and I don't expect to see Brent below 20 a barrel before April.

Dealers said the large investment funds, which have speculated on the price of oil over recent months, were seen baling out of the market in numbers.

Analysts said signs were that the oil inventory shortfall which underpinned crude prices throughout the second half of last year was beginning to ease.

Inventories in the European Union, excluding Sweden, rose by 13.51 million barrels in December to 1.034 billion barrels, Stichting Euroilstock said in a monthly report on Monday.

Latest data from the West's energy watchdog the International Energy Agency (IEA) showed inventories of distillates — diesel and heating oil — posted a contraseasonal rise in the industrialized nations of the OECD in November.

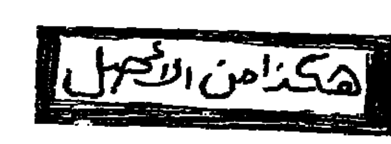
The year-on-year shortfall in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development oil inventories narrowed 17 million barrels in November, the IEA said in a monthly report.

Oil demand has come off the boil as refineries in the U.S. Persian Gulf, Europe and the Far East prepare for maintenance work.

There are a lot of pointers which should worry the bulls, said Pyne at UBS. The latest data show that supply is not as tight as it has been. One has to ask what will happen when the cold weather ends.

Traders said that, the weather apart, the oil price outlook for the next month or so could depend heavily on how gasoline demand pans out in the United States.

U.S. gasoline prices are under pressure at the moment from a million ton armada of product crossing the Atlantic from Europe. (Reuter)



SPORTS SUMMARY

Tehran Times Service

FOOTBALL

Top Teams Must Play Again

LONDON: English premiership sides Wimbledon, Aston Villa and Leeds United lived to fight another day after being held to shock draws by lower division opposition in Tuesday's third-round FA Cup clashes. On a night when three scheduled cup matches were postponed because of the freezing weather, and another was abandoned after an hour, Wimbledon saved their blushes with a 1-1 draw at second division Crewe Alexandra while Villa shared a goalless draw away to second division strugglers Notts County. Leeds United, meanwhile, came away with a 2-2 draw from first division Crystal Palace thanks to a late penalty save by Nigel Martyn.

Dalglish Takes Over

LONDON: Kenny Dalglish took over as manager at English Premier League side Newcastle United on Tuesday. Dalglish fills the vacancy left when Kevin Keegan resigned last Wednesday. The 45-year-old Dalglish quit his job as Blackburn's director of football in September. Keegan left the club after spending 60 million pounds (about 95 million dollars) in the transfer market to try to win Newcastle's first league title in 70 years. Dalglish replaced Keegan as a player at Liverpool in 1977 when Liverpool paid Glasgow Celtic 440,000 pounds (730,000-dollars) after Keegan moved to German side SV. Hamburg. He stepped down from the top job at Blackburn shortly after winning the premiership title in 1995 and had just as unexpectedly left Liverpool after six years and three league titles as player-manager.

Juventus Target Klinsmann and Ravanelli

TURIN, Italy: Juventus want to buy Bayern Munich star Jurgen Klinsmann to replace their Croatian striker Alen Boksic who will be out of action for two months with an ankle injury. The European champions were reported to be keen on taking on Klinsmann, in dispute with Bayern's Italian Coach Giovanni Trapattoni, until the end of the season. Fabrizio Ravanelli, who left for English Premier League side Middlesbrough after helping Juventus win the European Cup, is also said to be on their wanted list.

Trial Date Set for Tapie

MARSEILLE, France: Bernard Tapie, disgraced former Marseille president goes on trial here in May on fraud charges related to match-rigging. Court officials said the trial of Tapie and 19 others, including former national coach Michel Hidalgo, was scheduled for May 12-30. Tapie, charged with fraud, receiving and misuse of corporate funds, has threatened to expose wide-scale corruption in French football. Eamining magistrate Pierre Philipon's four-year investigation into fraud and false accounting at Marseille showed that 101 million francs (20 million dollars) had been diverted for rigging matches in the French league and in European competitions. Tapie says he invested 52 million francs (10 million dollars) of his own money into the club he took over in 1986.

Players Linked to Asian Betting Syndicate

WINCHESTER, England: Premiership goalkeepers Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers received vast sums of cash to throw the result of matches for a Far East betting syndicate, a court was told here on Tuesday. Former Liverpool and Southampton star Grobbelaar, Wimbledon 'keeper Segers, along with former Wimbledon striker John Fashanu, and Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim, were part of a complex web of corruption involving money from Indonesia, the court heard.

Prosecutor David Calvert Smith outlined the case against the accused, as one of the biggest scandals in British sporting history finally went to trial on Tuesday. The trial, which is expected to last 10 weeks, comes after a year-long investigation by British police launched after the allegations stunned the world of football when they appeared in the *Sun* newspaper in November 1994. All four men deny the charges but they could face up to seven years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine if found guilty.

Boro Dealt Devastating Blow

LONDON: Middlesbrough have been dealt a devastating blow in their fight for premiership survival after they were docked three points Tuesday for illegally calling off their game at Blackburn on December 21. Manager Bryan Robson left the five-hour hearing grim-faced and making no comment after the decision which leaves the Riverside club four points adrift of 19th-placed Southampton.

Middlesbrough were also fined 50,000 pounds (75,000-dollars) and ordered to pay the costs of the commission and could face a compensation order to Blackburn. On top of that they will still have to play the game at Ewood Park at a later date. Middlesbrough took the unprecedented step on December 20 of calling off the game with 23 players unavailable through injury and illness.

Hungarian Date for Venables' Aussie Soccer Stars

SYDNEY: Australia's National Coach Terry Venables has said his side are in the same class as European countries like Hungary and Austria and his words will soon be put to the test. Australia on Tuesday confirmed a match against Hungary in Budapest on April 2 which will be the first opportunity for Australia's army of overseas soccer talent — Mark Bosnich, Robbie Slater, Aurelio Vidmar, Ned Zelic and Paul Okon, to impress the former England manager.

Chelsea Look to Sign Maldini

ROME: Chelsea player-manager Ruud Gullit is looking to sign Italy's captain and left-back Paolo Maldini from AC Milan for 28 million dollars (around 17 million pounds). Should the deal go through, the transfer would eclipse the previous world record football signing of Alan Shearer by Newcastle United for 15 million pounds at the start of this season.

Judge Recommends Soccer Chief Resign

JOHANNESBURG: A South African judicial commission recommended Tuesday that soccer boss Solomon "Stix" Morewa resign or be fired by the South African Football Association (SAFA). Morewa, the executive president of SAFA, was accused Tuesday by Judge Benjamin Pickard, who heads a soccer commission of inquiry, of forging an unholy alliance with club owners, and of accepting unauthorized funds from the organization's coffers.



LONDON, United Kingdom (January 14): Leeds United's Brian Deane (foreground) screens the ball from Crystal Palace's Leif Andersen at Sellhurst Park during their FA Cup 3rd round cup. The match is currently being played.

(AFP PHOTO)

Graf Slow to Start, Fast to Finish

MELBOURNE, Australia — Hours after prosecutors in Germany asked for more than a 6-year sentence for her father, a distracted Steffi Graf started slowly Wednesday at the Australian Open, then finished fast amid unusual flashes of anger.

Graf, spraying balls wildly in the breeze, fell behind 0-4 in the first set against Larisa Neiland. Then they played the rest of the match.

Railing at herself, the umpire, the wind, the sprinkles of rain and everything else that bothered her, the top-seeded Graf charged the net more boldly, fought off four set points and closed out a 7-5, 6-2 victory to reach the third round.

The match ended moments before heavy rain halted play on outside courts and led to the roof being closed in the stadium.

In one stretch after trailing 2-5 in the first set, Graf won nine straight games as she skirted the upsets that have so far claimed fellow German and defending men's champion Boris Becker, Jennifer Capriati and several other seeded players.

"I started pretty slow and she started off hitting incredible shots," Graf said. "I needed some time to focus. I needed a while to find my rhythm and she didn't give me a lot of rallies in the beginning to get into the match.

"I was very quiet out there (early in the match). I needed something to push myself, not really wake up, but to get a bit more on my toes and alert."

What did the trick for her was a line call she didn't like. Graf suddenly was alert and loud when she argued with the umpire about a forehand that was called wide. Graf complained for a few moments, and complained again even after she broke the Latvian player's serve to take a 6-5 lead.

Graf has been able to win impressively over the past year, taking all three Grand Slam events she entered, despite the personal trauma of seeing her father imprisoned and on trial for tax evasion over the handling of $26.5 million of her earnings.

Hours before she took the court, prosecutors sought a prison term of six years and nine months for Peter Graf.

Graf, 58, masterminded a "web of lies planned over a long time" to dupe tax authorities, chief prosecutor Hubert Jobski said in his summing-up before the Mannheim state court. Final defense arguments were due to start Friday. The verdict is expected Jan. 24.

Steffi Graf looked somber as she spoke about her father's trial and the pressure of playing the U.S. Open when the trial began on Sept. 5 and this tournament when a verdict is coming down. She said she won't leave the Australian Open to be with him when that happens. (AP)



WINCHESTER, United Kingdom: Former Liverpool goalkeeper, Zimbabwean Bruce Grobbelaar arrives at Winchester Crown Court accompanied by his wife where he faces a charge of match-fixing along with John Fashanu, Hans Segers and Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim. All four deny the charges.

(AFP PHOTO)

Understanding Kung Fu as Described by a Master

By: Ja'far Qasempour Jahangir

Skills of Kung Fu

Standing Positions in Kung Fu

Method of Saluting and Respecting

(Part 22)

Salutation is one of the signs of human relations. The martial arts enjoy a special method of greeting and showing honor which differ from one class to another. The trainees always salute their trainer before and after the challenge as a sign of respect, symbol of power but with the concept of friendship. So, it should not be applied for concealing feelings, anger or vengeance. Since each style has its own method for salutation, hence the type and level of the trainee's class can be identified through observing the way of greeting. The most common way of bowing in Far East is offered below.



Main Standing Positions

The legs should be parallel and a little bit apart. The fists should be kept beside the legs and a little at the front of body. Only the head and trunk should be leant forward about 30 degrees and the hands and legs should be moved simultaneously and then turned to the first position.



Standing Position (on Horseback) in Kung Fu

This position of standing is the main and most common one in kung fu and needs high skills. Since this position of standing is similar to the horseback riding position, it has been titled 'On Horseback' position.

The legs in this position are parallel, apart and inclined at the size of shoulders' width. The knees are bent, trunk is straight and the fists are beside the legs. Almost all the main skills are practiced in this position in which you are seemed to be in front of your rival although you can defend or blow from the sides. Although the body is immovable and inclined when you practice the skills in 'On Horseback' position, but in real movements you can punch to the sides with a 90-degree rotation.

Standing Position (Main on Horseback)

In this position, you may move your body and head in any direction you wish. You should step with your hind leg without changing your position of your legs. And it is time for feet to become apart at the size of shoulders' width once again. Turn your body and buttocks in a way to take 'On Horseback' position. Now the body should be at the opposite direction of the beginning position. Do not bow when performing these four movements, and keep your head in the direction your body does. When you repeat the practices, you can add at the end a blow to the sides through rotating your buttock.

President Holds Iftar Reception

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri along with a group of Majlis representatives and members of the Cabinet participated in an *Iftar* (fast breaking) reception hosted by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani

According to a fax received from the Presidential Office, the guests attended the evening prayer led by the president.

Some of the Majlis representatives separately conferred with President Rafsanjani on the issues related to their constituencies.



Opposition Report Fighting in Eastern Sudan

ASMARA — Oppositions have made further gains in camps and areas of eastern Sudan, near the Eritrean and Ethiopian borders, a spokesman said Wednesday.

Forces of the Sudanese opposition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) took control Tuesday of Gedamayeeb, north of Kassala, close to the Eritrean border, said Yassir Said Arman, representative in Eritrea of the People's Liberation Army — part of the NDA.

He said fighting was continuing towards the camp of Koteneb, where he said government soldiers, who had taken part in December fighting at Hamesh Koreb were based.

A Sudanese Army helicopter was shot down at Hamesh Koreb.

On Tuesday, the spokesman said the opposition had made gains further south, including the strategic camp of Al Keli, between Kurmuk and Demazin on the border with Ethiopia.

He added that the leader of the People's Liberation Army John Garang had gone to Kurmuk, in the same region, on Tuesday to visit opposition forces.

The Sudanese government ordered a general mobilization Monday saying that fighting was raging between its army and Ethiopian Army Forces. It also accused Addis Ababa of attacking the border cities of Kurmuk and of Qeissan.

Ethiopia denied the charge late Monday.

The Sudanese opposition is based in Eritrea, which broke off diplomatic relations with Khartoum in 1994.

(AFP)

Turkish Army Kills 27 Kurds

ANKARA — Turkish troops killed 27 separatist Kurds in recent fighting in the country's troubled southeast, government officials said on Wednesday.

Twenty-five Kurds from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed in a clash near the Iraqi border in Sirnak Province, the southeast's regional governorship said in a statement.

Another two PKK members were killed in another clash with troops in Hakkari Province.

The governorship did not say when the clashes took place or if there were casualties among the security forces.

More than 23,000 people, including Kurds, members of the security forces and civilians, have died in violence in the southeast since 1984 when the PKK launched its armed campaign for a kurdish homeland.

(AFP)

Islamists Save Ciller From Trial

ANKARA — Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller on Wednesday narrowly escaped from a supreme court trial on corruption charges with the support of her Islamist coalition partners, the Anatolia news agency said.

A parliamentary committee, which had been set up to investigate corruption charges against Ciller regarding her personal assets, turned down a proposal for her trial.

Anatolia said eight deputies from Ciller's conservative True Path Party and the pro-Islamic Welfare Party of her coalition partner, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, had voted in her favor while seven opposition deputies had supported her trial.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

FRANCE...

"Any delay in the applications of the OSCE ... could have serious consequences for the future of the Federal Yugoslav Republic," said the letter, cited by a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

"We remain vigilant," he added, commenting on decisions by local commissions in Belgrade and Serbia's second town of Nis to recognize opposition victories in those cities.

"We await the confirmation and the concretization of these legal decisions, as well as the recognition of opposition victories in all the cities cited" in the OSCE report, compiled by former Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez.

The report concluded that opposition parties had won majorities in Belgrade and 13 other major towns in November 17 local elections which were subsequently annulled.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

YAQUB...

nian officials.

Yaqub Khan will also discuss with the Iranian officials Tehran-Islamabad cooperation as well as the latest developments in Kashmir and the region during his 3-day official visit.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati also told reporters at the airport that issues of mutual interest will be discussed during Yaqub Khan's visit.

Velayati stressed that though the crisis in Afghanistan relates to the Afghan people but since Iran and Pakistan as neighbors of Afghanistan are in a way influenced by the developments in that country, they are ready to help the Afghan government and nation to restore peace and tranquility to the country.

He expressed hope that further coordination between Iran and Pakistan will result in understandings to the interest of the Afghan nation.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

SYRIA...

Lebanese President Elias Hrawi expressed fears Wednesday about possible negative consequences on Lebanon and Syria from the Israeli-Palestinian accord on the West Bank town of Al-Khalil. "President Hrawi estimated that this accord does not necessarily mean Israel's return from its negative position toward the Middle East peace process," Information Minister Bassem Sabeh said after a Cabinet session.

"Israel could use it as a means of pressure against Syria and Lebanon," Sabeh quoted Hrawi as saying.

The Muslim militant group Hamas Wednesday slammed the new Israeli-Palestinian accord on Al-Khalil, saying it kept Palestinian residents at Israel's "mercy" and only served to ease international pressure on the Zionist state.

While "We welcome any true, effective liberation of any inch of Palestinian territory, we do not consider the redeployments in general and from Hebron in particular ... a liberation upon which complete national independence could be built," Hamas said in a statement.

Iran on Wednesday rejected the Israeli-Palestinian accord, saying it was an indication of the Palestinian Authority's weakness.

"This agreement is a sign of passivity on the part of partisans' capitulation before Israel," Tehran radio said, referring to the Middle East peace process.

The United States has given Israel leeway in the scope of its military withdrawal from the West Bank under the Al-Khalil accord initialed on Wednesday, an Israeli official said.

The official, asking not to be named, said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher sent a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that gives Israel room to maneuver over the extent of Israel's pullback.

"The letter gives us some space in terms of sites and areas of responsibility that will be transferred to the Palestinians. It does give Israel a certain flexibility," he told AFP.

"Israel would define the areas of responsibility," the official said. "It's important because we're going to be talking also about final-status negotiations," which are now due to start in two months.

Under the accord on Israel's pullback from most of Al-Khalil, the army is also to carry out a withdrawal in three phases, starting in March, from rural areas in the West Bank.

The 1995 autonomy accord calls for Israeli forces to redeploy to "specified military locations," without going into details.

Most of the West Bank city of Al-Khalil is to be handed over to Palestinian rule in the coming days, with the Israeli Army staying on in areas where some 400 Jewish settlers live.

But the extent of further pullbacks remains to be negotiated and is a source of considerable disagreement.

The Palestinians argue that it should place up to 90 percent of the West Bank under their rule, whereas Israel puts the figure at a maximum of 50 to 60 percent.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat struck a landmark agreement on Al-Khalil pullout.

The agreement, clinched after three months of tough negotiations, marked the first concrete progress in the peace process since the right-wing Netanyahu came to power in June pledging to make Israel's security (interests) as top priority.

Some 400 militant Jewish settlers live surrounded by 120,000 Palestinians in Al-Khalil, where U.S.-born Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 Muslims at a mosque in February 1994.

U.S., mediator Dennis Ross, announcing the agreement alongside Netanyahu and Arafat following more than two hours of late-night talks, said it provided for a handover of most of Al-Khalil to Palestinian rule in the coming days.

He said it also included letters of assurance, called a "note for the record," concerning further Israeli withdrawals from West Bank rural areas.

"I am very pleased to announce on behalf of the two leaders that they have reached agreement on a protocol on a Hebron (Al-Khalil) redeployment and on a note for the record on non-Hebron issues," Ross said.

The exact content of the letters of assurance was not revealed.

Other officials said further withdrawals, required under a 1995 interim peace accord signed by the previous Labor government, would be carried out in three stages between March of this year and August 31, 1998.

The deadline is a year later than called for in the interim accord, marking a victory for Netanyahu, but a year earlier than he initially sought.

Israeli radio said the troop redeployment from Al-Khalil would take place over the next five days.

The extent of further pullbacks, however, remains to be negotiated and is a source of considerable disagreement, with Palestinians claiming it should place up to 90 percent of the West Bank under their rule and Israelis putting the figure at a maximum of 50 to 60 percent.

Israeli radio said the accord calls for the opening of talks on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip within two months.

Under peace accords signed in 1993, agreement on the final status should be reached by May 1999.

Palestinians are calling for an Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967 and the creation of a Palestinian state with East Bait-ul-Moqaddas as its capital.

Israel opposes an independent state, rules out a withdrawal from East Bait-ul-Moqaddas and intends to keep under its control a large part of the territories, where some 140,000 Jewish settlers live.

Netanyahu and Arafat shook hands after Ross made his announcement, but neither spoke to the press. Ross said each man had spoken by telephone with Clinton, Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to thank them for their roles in brokering the agreement.

Under the deal, Israeli troops will remain in about 20 percent of Al-Khalil and patrol nearby Arab quarters jointly with Palestinians to protect settlers and Jewish religious sites.

The agreement was initialled by the chief negotiators — Dan Shomron for Israel and Saeb Erakat for the Palestinians — and will be formally signed within one or two days according to Ross.

Arafat called a meeting of the Palestinian leadership for Wednesday night but was expected to have no trouble gaining approval of the agreement.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

LEBED...

ried out real work."

Meanwhile, Gennady Seleznev, the communist speaker of the State Duma, the Lower House of Parliament, said Yeltsin was proving increasingly incapable of exercising the huge powers accorded to him by the constitution, and Russia was experiencing "a crisis of power."

The Duma Council, a grouping of senior Parliament deputies, cited Yeltsin's lengthy absences from the Kremlin as grounds to launch impeachment proceedings against him Tuesday, and asked lawyers to consider a draft resolution to that effect

Legal experts for the Russian Lower House of Parliament gave a thumbs down Wednesday to a drive to impeach President Boris Yeltsin on grounds of ill health, Interfax news agency reported.

"The Russian constitution and current laws do not give the state Duma authority to decide on an early end to the president's powers in case of permanent incapacity to fulfill his duties due to ill health," the deputy of the Legal Department said.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

AFGHAN...

The Islamabad talks brought together delegates from the Taleban militia which captured Kabul in September, and those of the coalition led by the northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam and Defense Minister Ahmed Shah Masood.

The Taleban vice minister of foreign affairs, Sher Mohammed Stanakzai, in an interview Monday adopted a tought stand on the demand for demilitarization of Kabul, made by the opposition coalition.

He ruled out a Taleban pull-out from Kabul, as well as the setting up of a joint police force or ar international force.

Stanakzai said the Talebar wanted a negotiated solution to the conflict which has plagued the country for 20 years, adding that i none was found, the Taleban woul wipe out its detractors.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

CHINA...

"This plot goes against the tren of the times and the will of th Chinese people," he added, whe asked about the Tuesday meeting the Vatican.

The Vatican is one of around 3 states which continue to hold dip lomatic relations with Taipei rath than Beijing.

Taiwan split from the Chines mainland in 1949 after a bitter civ war. While Taipei still holds reun fication as its ultimate goal, Beijin has become increasingly fearf that the island is moving towar formal independence from th mainland.

Beijing refuses to have dipl matic ties with any country reco nizing Taiwan.

(AF

(Contd from Pg.5)

NEW IMF...

with the continuation with t loan, Wolf said.

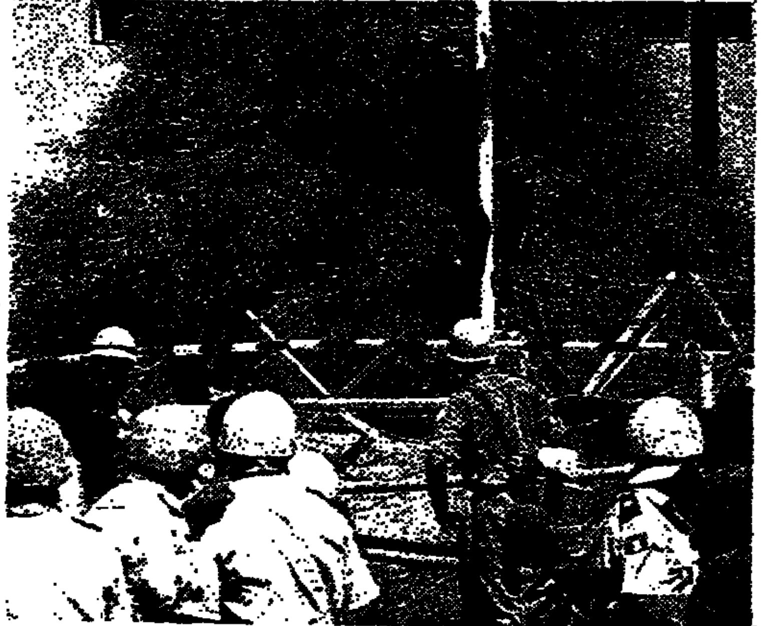
The fund is expecting not on a continued improvement in t tax take but the resumption structural reforms in indust which slowed last year.

Only a combination of the tw would undermine Russia's thri ing parallel economy.

According to official figur output fell by a further six perc last year, when experts were e pecting a ri

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Greek - Cypriot protester Solomos Solomou seen climbing the Greek flagpole to lower the Greek flag.

Cyprus Plays Down Talk of Military Accord

NICOSIA — Cyprus on Tuesday played down U.S. talk of an imminent breakthrough in a military dialogue to reduce tension along the ceasefire line dividing the island's Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Cypriot government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides denied the two sides were on the brink of signing an agreement. "We are still talking about it," he told Reuters.

U.S. envoy Carey Cavanaugh and State Department spokesman Nicolas Burns announced in Cyprus and Washington respectively on Monday that an agreement was close.

President (Glafcos) Clerides has reiterated to Mr. Cavanaugh his intention to intervene in the military dialogue with our own military people and see what is happening with the dialogue and try to help it to advance. Thats all," said Cassoulides.

He said Clerides would meet the commander of the Greek Cypriot National Guard next week for a briefing on the military talks which have been held under United Nations auspices for several months.

The UN proposals relate to the unloading of live ammunition among troops on either side of the 180-km (110-mile) ceasefire line and unmanning sentry posts. It also imposes a code of conduct for soldiers to follow.

Four Greek Cypriots and one Turkish Cypriot soldier have been killed in incidents along the UN-patrolled buffer zone since June, greatly raising tension between the two sides.

Cavanaugh was sent to the island to defuse a row over Cyprus's decision to purchase Russian anti-aircraft missiles and Turkish threats of a military strike to stop their deployment.

The U.S. envoy said the military dialogue proposals would be a boost towards easing tension between the two sides.

"Both sides today gave their support to very quick and immediate implementation of that pack of proposals," Cavanaugh said on Monday evening before leaving for Athens for further talks on Cyprus.

Earlier he said the crisis in Cyprus had been defused because its government had assured him it would not bring in any part of the missile system for at least 16 months.

Turkey threatened military action several times last week to stop deployment of the S-300 system which the Cypriot government says is purely defensive.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north of the island after a coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece. Turkey has around 30,000 troops in the north while the internationally recognised Cypriot government, which has a military pact with Athens, has 11,500 in the south.

(Reuter)

Afghan Factions Still Far Apart

KABUL — The United Nations-sponsored talks between the warring Afghan factions have much ground to cover if they are to reconcile the deep divisions between the two sides.

The talks in the Pakistani capital, between three representatives of the purist Islamic taleban and three members of the opposition alliance, started on Monday.

The UN Special Representative for Afghanistan, Dr. Norbert Holl, described Monday's session as "the first meeting...that did not end in disaster."

He did not say if any agreement had been reached in the talks, only that there had been a free flow of ideas.

Although both sides in the Afghan conflict agree in principle that the only route to peace is through negotiations and not force of arms, their demands would, on the surface, seem to be irreconcilable.

The Taleban demand that a ceasefire be established and an exchange of prisoners take place before any further discussions on the future of Afghanistan.

Although we have had discussions about a ceasefire and an exchange of prisoners before, these have not taken place. These should be done before we can discuss other problems, said the Taleban's Acting Deputy Foreign Minister, Sher Abbas Stanakzai, in a recent interview with Reuters.

There were reports on Monday that the opposition alliance launched a major offensive against the Taleban in the remote nothwestern province of Badghis, but the outcome of the reported offensive was unclear.

The opposition has demanded that Kabul, which fell to the Taleban in late September last year, be demilitarized and handed over to a neutral security force.

The Taleban have rejected the proposal, saying that Kabul is already demilitarized, and that to invite armed men into the capital would be a recipe for further factional fighting in the city.

The demilitarization of Kabul is an irrational issue because Kabul is already controlled by police. If anyone insists on this matter they want further looting of Kabul and we will not accept such a deal, the Taleban's Minister of Information, Amir Khan Mutaqi, said.

Kabul is heavily militarized. Tanks frequently rumble through the city's shattered streets and small groups of heavily-armed Taleban fighters race round the city in battered Japanese pick-up trucks.

The idea of a neutral security force for Afghanistan is one that has featured prominently in most of the abortive peace plans that have been proposed.

But it's an idea that mystifies most Afghan-watchers.

After almost five years of war, this country is polarized and broke. "Where are they going to find these neutral people and how are they going to pay them?" asked one, who preferred not to be named.

Previous attempts by the United Nations to broker peace in Afghanistan have ended in failure. In 1995, Holl's predecessor said he had an agreement from then-president Burhanuddin Rabbani to step down in favor of an interim administration of technocrats.

The deal foundered when the Taleban refused to take part and Rabbani said any process that did not involve them was worse than no deal at all.

Many foreign analysts in Kabul believe that the factions are only participating in the talks to stall for time while they prepare for a resumption of military operations.

(Reuter)

Convicted Trader Releases Memoir Accusing Daiwa of Cover-Up

TOKYO — The star trader who caused the $1.1 billion Daiwa Bank bond trading scandal has written a memoir in prison accusing his former employer of working hard to hide the crime from U.S. prosecutors.

In "The Confession," sample copies of which were released yesterday, Toshihide Iguchi claims that officials from Daiwa Bank and Japan's Finance Ministry secretly met at least four times in Tokyo soon after he confessed to his boss in July 1995 about his unauthorized U.S. bond trading over a 12-year period.

Iguchi also alleges that Daiwa executives discussed the possibility of transferring part of their $1.1 billion losses to a paper company in the Cayman Islands to hide them.

"Everyone agrees that if this becomes a problem in America, we will be in big trouble," Iguchi quoted an executive as saying before the scandal became public in New York, where Daiwa's U.S. operation was based.

Officials at Daiwa Bank and the Finance Ministry refused to comment on the book or its allegations yesterday.

The memoir will be sold in Japan later this month, its major Japanese publisher, Bungei Shunju, said at a news conference yesterday, during which it released the sample copies.

In December, a U.S. district court sentenced Iguchi, who pleaded guilty to fraud, to four years in prison. He also must pay a $2 million fine and $70,000 in restitution.

"I thought that it would be my social responsibility to reveal the truth about the case, which left a huge stain in the Japanese financial history, and decided to write a book in my jail cell," Iguchi said in a handwritten statement released by the publisher

Daiwa Bank pleaded guilty in February to conspiring to help hide Iguchi's losses and agreed to pay $340 million in fines. It was forced to close down its U.S. operation.

Two other Daiwa employees charged with smaller roles in the scandal also described a conspiracy involving the highest echelons of Daiwa management during their court testimony.

About 10 days after Iguchi's confession, Daiwa executives held the first meeting in late July 1995 at Park Lane Hotel in Manhattan to discuss how to cover up the loss, Iguchi writes.

He was instructed to keep quiet for several months while the bank considered cover-up measures, Iguchi alleges.

"I was shocked," Iguchi says in the memoir. "I thought I would be fired within weeks. Imagining doing this for four more months, I felt horrified."

He said a lack of risk control at the bank, and slack supervision by Japanese and U.S. financial authorities, allowed him to continue his wrongdoing for more than a decade.

He also faulted slack efforts by U.S. federal authorities to investigate Daiwa's American operation in 1992 and 1993. (AP)

China Prepares Baptism of Fire for Albright

BEIJING — China launched a preemptive strike yesterday against U.S. Secretary of State-designate Madeleine Albright, warning her of the dangers of pressurizing Beijing over human rights.

Labelling Albright an "opinionated woman," an editorial in the official *China Daily* criticized remarks she made on China during her appearance before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this month.

While flatly rejecting any policy that might isolate China, Albright had stressed that Beijing's anger at U.S. human rights criticism should not deter Washington from pressing demands for an end to repression.

She also indicated that Washington would be willing to co-sponsor a resolution criticizing China's human rights record at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in March.

Noting that the "smug calculations" of the United States had been upset in its six previous, failed attempts to table such a resolution, the *China Daily* said Albright's threat directly contradicted President Bill Clinton's policy of "constructive engagement" with China.

"If the United States is really serious about improving its ties with China, it should respect China first, should not interfere in China's internal affairs, and should take a fair-minded attitude towards China's human rights progress," the editorial said.

Any attempt to sponsor a resolution in Geneva could only impair the progess made in Sino-U.S. ties since the presidential meeting between Clinton and Jiang Zemin in Manila in November, it added.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore is expected to visit China in late March or early April, paving the way for an exchange of state visits.

"China will never allow itself to be pressured to accept others' values or give up its choice of social system," the editorial said.

The watchdog accused Clinton of dragging because of a feeling in Washington that pressuring China on human rights wasted valuable leverage and damaged U.S. economic and security interests. (AFP)

Yeltsin, in Hospital, Presses for Belarus Merger

MOSCOW — Boris Yeltsin, confined to hospital with pneumonia, appears to have won backing from conservative legislators for his proposal to press on with a plan to merge with Belarus on the country's western border.

Yeltsin's Press Ssecretary Sergei Yastrzhembsky teld reporters on Monday that the president was in stable condition five days after entering the elite Central Clinical Hospital.

He said doctors examining the president found his temperature and other indicators in the normal range but gave no indication when he would be released. A convalescence period of two to three weeks is expected.

Yastrzhembsky's announcement that Yeltsin had sent a letter to Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko asking both sides to consider a referendum on faster integration amounted to a diplomatic offensive against NATO's eastward expansion.

Lukashenko, an ardent advocate of a merger, expressed delight. He has complained that an accord signed last April proclaiming a community between the neighbors has made little headway.

"I am very happy that the Russian president has reacted in this way," Lukashenko told reporters in the Belarussian capital Minsk. "This is our baby, mine and the Russian president's. And I think we should promote this process, and implement it," he said.

Aman Tuleyev, communist minister in favor of ties with former Soviet republics, praised the initiative on independent NTV television as "common sense...the only real step to counter NATO is the one undertaken by (Yeltsin)."

Viktor Ilyukhin, a prominent communist in the Russian Parliament, said the move was logical to boost Yeltsin's popularity after being out of the public eye for most of the six months since his re-election last July.

"Apparently Boris Nikolayevich is resorting to this unbeatable card that he played at the beginning of the election campaign," he said. "We must take into account what the West says but also look after our own interests."

Yeltsin used integration with former Woviet republics as a successful campaign theme last year, signing the community pact with Lukashenko amid pomp in the Kremlin.

The pact has since made little concrete progress, not least because the performance of Belarus's economy under Lukashenko's reluctant approach lags far behind Russia.

Yeltsin's treatment for pneumonia less than two months after bypass surgery hinders his foreign policy strategy, a priority in politics ahead of NATO's expansion eastward.

Leading candidates for enlargement this year are Poland, the Czech republic and Hungary. Moscow says such moves threaten its security and is considering its response.

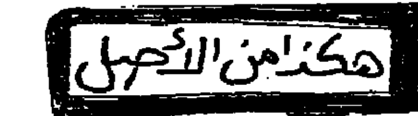
Lukashenko's authoritarian rule has been repeatedly criticised in the West, particularly his staging of a referendum last November, which secured overwhelming approval for expanding his own powers.

He opened a session of Belarus's new upper house of Parliament on Monday as the Council of Europe, the pan-European body monitoring democratic progress and human rights, suspended Belarus's special guest status.

Belarus's liberal and nationalist minority opposition criticised Yeltsin's proposal as a further step towards eliminating Belarussian statehood, at best shaky after centuries of domination by tsarist and communist Russia.

The people who have come to power make no attempt to preserve our republic's statehood, Gennady Karpenko, deputy chairman of the rump Parliament declared dissolv.d by Lukashenko, told Russian television.

(Reuter)



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Nanny Left Frantic When Taxi Drives Off

HONG KONG -- A New Zealand nanny was left frantic in a Hong Kong street after a cab driver drove off with her six-month-old charge in the back, reports said Wednesday.

The 28 year-old nanny, who identified herself only as Nick, had just alighted from the taxi Tuesday and was about to retrieve the child when the automatic door was shut and the car drove off, the south China Morning Post said.

The taxi driver then travelled around Hong Kong island for some time, oblivious to his sleeping cargo, before his next passenger found the baby.

(AFP)

Priyanka Gandhi Faces Lawsuit Before Wedding

NEW DELHI -- India's most eligible bachelor girl Priyanka Gandhi is in the news ahead of her February wedding after a villager claimed he had already married the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty.

Gandhi, 26, who boasts an impeccable pedigree with three former prime ministers in her father, grandmother and great-grandfather, was scheduled to appear in a New Delhi court Wednesday to answer charges that she had married Vicharapu Ramkrishna Gowd in 1991.

The 41-year-old Gowd, a villager from southern India, who was jailed for five months in 1982 for molesting a doctor, had made similar claims before.

(AFP)



CAIRO, Egypt (Jan. 14): Egyptian rescuers drag bodies out of the bus that crashed in the Nile River in Cairo. At least 39 people were reported killed and 28 injured when the bus packed with people plunged into the river.

(AFP PHOTO)

Stones and Furniture Fly as Seoul Hit by Worst Clashes of Labor Conflict

SEOUL -- Thousands of striking workers fought running battles with riot police here Wednesday, even dropping furniture from office blocks on their opponents, in South Korea's worst violence in a decade.

The clashes, sparked by angry protests against a new labor law, saw demonstrators battling police in running street battles in downtown Seoul and violence also erupted elsewhere in the country.

In Seoul, police fired volleys of teargas shells from vehicle-mounted launchers when 30,000 demonstrators, spearheaded by activists wielding steel pipes, tried to break through a wall of riot police.

Near Parliament, another 20,000 office workers and others marched around the ruling party headquarters. Some pelted the building with eggs.

In the southern city of Chonju, thousands of workers burned an effigy of President Kim Young-Sam and fought riot police with rocks and clubs, trying to march toward a ruling party building barricaded by trucks, reports said.

Wednesday's clashes were the most violent and widespread since 1987, residents said, when tens of thousands of people rose up against former President Chun Doo-Hwan, now jailed for corruption and mutiny.

By dusk, running clashes had spread to three main streets in Seoul's central business area, with a three kilometer (1.2 square mile) stretch of Chong-No Boulevard choked with tear-gas and smoke from fires lit by the protestors.

Riot troops, shocked by the strength of protests, fired repeated volleys of gas at point-blank range into groups of spectators. Young pedestrians joined the protests, hurling rocks.

City blocks rang with the cracking sound of teargas shells and the clangs of rocks and bars bouncing off police shields, as the fighting trapped rush-hour commuters, buses and cars in clouds of teargas.

(AFP)

Protests, Strikes in Bulgaria as Police Brace for Trouble

SOFIA -- Strike action began Wednesday across Bulgaria as police in the capital braced for more street protests to press the government into holding early elections this spring.

Encouraged by the popular support its daily demonstrations have drawn over the past 12 days, the opposition said it was not prepared to ease its stance despite the announcement by the ruling Socialist Party on Tuesday that it was ready to hold elections "before the end of the year."

"Demonstrations in public places will continue as long as the BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) does not accept early elections in May," Ivan Kostov, president of the main opposition party United Democratic Forces (UDF), told AFP.

Riot police took up positions outside the Bulgarian Parliament as deputies held a regular session boycotted by the opposition in its drive to force the the BSP, made up of former communists, from power.

Taxi drivers parked their vehicles in front of the building, sounding their horns in protest, while several hundred demonstrators hurled insults at Socialist deputies as they left the building.

Officers equipped with truncheons and shields were controlling access to the building, where fierce clashes between police and protestors last weekend left 258 people injured, according to the opposition.

(AFP)

Oil Spill Spreads Further as Moscow Makes Apology

MIKUNI, Japan -- A massive oil spill from a Russian tanker spread menacingly along the Japanese coast on Wednesday as Moscow's ambassador apologized for the devastation.

The spill washed up in Suzu and Wajima in the northwest of the Noto Peninsula and was expected to go further north, the maritime agency reported.

"We cannot predict when this disaster will stop, but we can say that the damage will expand as the oil spill has kept spreading," an agency official said.

Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK), quoting government officials, said the size of the spill could reach 4,900 tons, above an earlier estimate of 3,700 tons.

The huge spill from a Russian tanker which sank in a storm in the Sea of Japan on January 2 has polluted a huge length of the Sea of Japan coast in central and western Japan.

The 13,000-ton Nakhodka, bound for Russia's Far East with 17,100 tons of fuel oil, broke in two about 150 kilometers (93 miles) off Oki Island. The bow of the vessel went adrift and grounded on rocks some 200 meters (yards) off the coast near Mikuni.

Russia's ambassador to Tokyo apologized for the huge oil spill that has devastated a length of Japan's coast.

(AFP)

Opposition Vows No Letup in Campaign to Restore Election Victories

BELGRADE -- The Serbian government braced for fresh protests Wednesday as opponents of President Slobodan Milosevic vowed to continue street demonstrations until their municipal election victories in 14 towns are recognized.

Local commissions in Belgrade and Serbia's second town of Nis announced Tuesday that the opposition victories in those cities would be recognized.

Milosevic's ruling Socialist Party (SPS) has 48 hours to appeal the decisions and local media speculated that it would do so.

But opposition leader Vuk Draskovic said "We will continue with our peaceful demonstrations until Milosevic and his regime reinstate all the election results."

Hundreds of thousands of Serbians have taken to the streets daily since the November 17 elections to force Milosevic to recognize the opposition Together Coalition's electoral triumphs in 14 towns and cities.

The latest concessions brought to seven the number of cities where opposition victories have been reinstated after the government originally annulled the results.

The United States appeared sceptical of Milosevic's undertaking to recognize the results in the two key cities.

(AFP)

Blizzards Kill 34 in Northwest China

BEIJING -- The death toll from violent snow storms in northwest China increased on Wednesday to at least 34 with 30,000 people said to be facing starvation.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs also said nearly 100,000 livestock had already perished.

Since snow storms started battering the autonomous region of Xinjiang in late December, 34 people have been confirmed dead, four are missing and 18 severely injured, a ministry statement said.

It warned that worse weather was to come. "Meteorologists are forecasting more blizzards and the situation could well worsen in the near future," the statement said.

Among those killed, 30 died in five separate avalanches caused by the heavy snowfall in the prefectures of Altay, Yili and Bayingoleng.

In mountainous Altay, an estimated 10,000 herdsmen have been cut off by heavy snowdrifts, together with 980 mineral prospectors and a team of 25 geologists.

The official Xinhua News Agency described the situation in Xinjiang as "critical," with 30,000 people "starving" in Altay prefecture.

(AFP)

Major Comfortably Wins Latest Parliamentary Test

LONDON -- British Prime Minister John Major comfortably won the first important vote in Parliament since he lost his overall majority last month.

In a late-night Tuesday vote on the finance bill implementing the 1997/1998 budget, the government defeated a hostile amendment put down by the main opposition Labour Party by 322 votes to 287.

The outcome of the vote had never been seriously in doubt, but the margin of victory will be a boost to Major, who wants to delay Britain's general election until May to give more time for the strong economy to revive his Conservative Party's fortunes.

I am prepared to play it long, yes. Of course I am prepared to play it long, he told reporters earlier in Lahore, Pakistan, who asked him about the timing of the election.

(Reuter)

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait (Jan. 14): Kuwaiti MP Fahad al-Khannah (L) speaks to MP Ahmed Baqer during the Kuwaiti Assembly session in Kuwait City The Parliament met to discuss the security situation and a controversial measure taken by Kuwaiti Oil Minister to refer to the public prosecution chairman of the Kuwait Oil Tankers Company KOTC and other board members for taking financial bonus through an illegal manner.

(AFP PHOTO)

Mortar Shelling Kills Three, Cycle-Bomb Explodes in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India -- Indian soldiers fired mortar shells into houses killing three separatist on Wednesday in Kashmir, as three people were injured in a blast in the state summer capital, police said.

Officials said soldiers opened fire with mortars at a rebel stronghold in the southern Kashmiri town of Sangam when separatists inside refused to surrender and fired back with automatic weapons.

Three separatists were killed and two houses destroyed in the shelling, they said.

In the state capital of Srinagar three people were critically injured Wednesday when a bomb exploded near a mosque in a downtown residential district, police said.

The bomb, hidden in a bicycle went off in Kawdara district, seriously injuring an Indian border guard and two civilian Muslim women.

So far none of Kashmir's two dozen guerrilla organisations have claimed responsibility for Wednesday's explosion.

(AFP)



European Investors Wary Ahead of U. S. Data

LONDON — London and Paris shares pushed their way to new trading highs on Tuesday but most European investors were wary ahead of crucial U.S. economic data.

Bourses took their early lead from another record close on Wall Street and calmer Asian Markets, although the main focus was on the U.S. Inflation data for December.

U.S. Bonds fell overnight as investors braced for news on the strength of the U.S. Economy. That spilled over into Europe where German and British government bonds drifted lower.

On foreign exchange markets, the dollar edged lower within a narrow range below 1.59 marks and held around 116.50 yen as traders awaited the U.S. Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) and retail sales figures due at 13:30 GMT.

Unless the CPI and retail sales data is well above expectations, it's hard to see the dollar breaking its current ranges in the short term, one German Bank dealer said.

Comments by U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan in Belgium appeared to have no immediate impact on the markets.

Greenspan, who caused turmoil late last year by warning about irrational exuberance in financial markets, urged central banks on Tuesday not to take risks with inflation.

In the long run inflation is essentially a monetary phenomenon, he said in a speech at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium.

After Monday's string of record closes among European bourses, several markets paused for breath.

But London and Paris remained buoyant around Monday's record levels and both the Stockholm and Helsinki Bourses set new highs. Frankfurt, in contrast, slipped a few points.

In London, the FTSE 100 index hit record highs above 4,128 points after rising half a percent in morning trade.

Led by surging bank and supermarket stocks, the FTSE 100 defied some market expectations that it would consolidate. Other traders said the FTSE could rally further with investment funds flush with cash and the Dow's run showing no sign of stumbling.

"I think the market could still have a bit of life in it," said one senior dealer. "We have been lagging behind Wall Street and the next rise in U.K. Rates is probably discounted."

Among supermarket stocks TESCO was up 12p at 366 and J. Sainsbury up 10. 5p at 401. Among banks Lloyds TSB was up 9p at 467 and Abbey National up 15 at 788-1/2p.

In Paris the Blue Chip CAC-40 index surpassed Monday's intraday record by a fraction of a point, hitting 2,371.94 before easing.

Rises on Rhone-Poulenc and TOTAL helped push the CAC index higher at midsession but traders said the market remained prudent ahead of the U.S. indicators.

Total benefited from a recommendation by Painewebber, likely to prompt U.S. buying, while expected profit growth of 20-25 percent for rhone sparked interest.

German shares traded a few points lower during the morning, rangebound ahead of the U.S. Data.

Lufthansa fell 80 pfennigs to 21.05 marks but was well off its lows after news that its shares were to be made non-freely transferable and worries about a possible capital increase.

Pharmaceuticals company Hoechst weakened 23 pfennigs to 70.17 marks after the U.S. Food and Drugs authority proposed withdrawing approval for its Seldane allergy drug. Gold was fixed at 357.30 against 359.60 previously, with the bullion market confused and nervous after news that the Dutch Central Bank had sold some of its gold reserves. Silver was indicated two cents lower at 4.70. (Reuter)

Greater China, ASEAN to Lead World Growth Into 21st Century

SINGAPORE — Asia will dominate world economic growth in 1997 with greater China and Southeast Asia leading the way into the 21st century, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) analysts said Wednesday.

Despite an economic slowdown in some key economies, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the seven-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were forecast to collectively enjoy robust growth in the medium term.

"I've got my money on both ... greater China (will grow) by just under eight percent over the next five years, and ASEAN by about 7.3 percent," said Ken Davies, senior regional economist for the EIU.

ASEAN includes Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The EIU, part of the London-based economist publishing and business information group, listed China, Vietnam and Malaysia as the second, third and fourth fastest-growing economies in 1997 in its annual world economic outlook.

Iraq topped the list because of its resumption of oil sales and the extremely low base against which the new growth is being compared.

Ten Asian countries made it to the top 20 list of the EIU, which forecast world economic growth this year to be unchanged at 2.9 percent, with the impetus coming from developing nations.

Growth among industrial nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was estimated at 2.4 percent.

Asia and Australia except Japan would grow by a relatively moderate 6.5 percent in 1997, the EIU said, citing a slowdown in exports and efforts to cool down overheating economies with tighter monetary policies.

The so-called Asian Tigers — Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan — have lately seen slower growth compared to the heady days of double-digit expansion but Davies said prospects were 'still reasonably positive'. Describing the slowdown as largely cyclical, Davies told AFP that exports would pick up this year amid added capacity and increased investment.

On the current labor unrest in South Korea, Davies said that the campaign against controversial new labor laws could affect exports but if the situation normalizes, the effects would be temporary and the backlog would be filled.

The Philippines, which has bucked the slowdown trend in Southeast Asia, should see growth of around 6.5 percent by 2000, he said.

"We're forecasting a gradual acceleration in growth going above six percent, which is tremendous really. Back in the early nineties the economy was depressed for political reasons and because of the power cuts," he said.

On Malaysia, he said: "We're reasonably bullish ... We don't really think that growth rates are going to fall below eight percent." China has achieved 'a really successful soft landing' from the double-digit growth rates it once enjoyed, and its economy was forecast to expand by 9.3 percent this year.

"Below 10 percent, nine-to-10 percent, they can sustain," Davies said.

The EIU report said Latin America and the Carribean would fare better than last year with average GDP growth of 3. 6 percent in 1997, but the report described this as 'slightly disappointing'. In the Middle East, Iraq would be the exception as other countries face economic and fiscal constraints. Six Middle East countries were listed among the 20 slowest-growing economies in 1997.

Iraq's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was forecast to grow 30 percent in 1997, after posting double-digit negative rates from 1991-95.

"The oil sales and the gradual reintegration of Iraq into the world economy are going to mean quite a sharp recovery," Davies said. (AFP)

Malta Fights Tax Evasion

VALLETTA, Malta — Malta's new Labour government wants the private sector to power the economy but is determined to get tough on tax evasion and will introduce new taxes to offset a larger-than-expected government deficit.

Finance Minister Lino Spiteri, presenting the government's first budget on Monday night, promised increased penalties and additional random audits of individuals and firms to deter tax evasion.

The government wanted to instil a culture of fiscal morality where everyone paid due taxes, he said.

Income tax would remain unchanged, he told parliament, but the government would increase a range of other levies.

The new taxes have been drawn up in a way not to harm industry and the economy. This government wants the private sector to be the motor of the economy, Spiteri told reporters.

The Labour government, elected on October 26, inherited a deficit of 112 million pounds ($309 million). He said this was three times the figure projected by the former nationalist government a year ago.

The deficit amounted to 9.3 percent of GDP, with ordinary revenue totalling 446.1 million pounds compared with a projected 515.4 million pounds.

Most of the shortfall was in value added tax and income tax, where projections had been optimistic, the minister said.

Recurrent expenditure rose by 23.1 million pounds more than planned to reach 475.4 million pounds, while capital expenditure dropped by 16 million pounds.

Spiteri announced no new capital projects, but said projects underway would be sustained so that the rhythm of the economy would not be harmed.

Taxes introduced in the budget, ranging from higher car licence fees and petrol prices to a new tax on foreign travel, would contribute some 12 million pounds to government revenue.

Spiteri said, however, the strongest effort for a reduction of the deficit would be made through more efficient tax collection and more responsible government spending, with a reduction in waste and insistence on value for money.

The government, he said, would stick to its electoral promise to remove value added tax (vat), but the system was being retained for a short time pending the publication of a White Paper for wide discussion of government plans.

Spiteri said (vat) would be replaced by a new system of indirect taxation later in the year. Care would be taken to ensure the new system did not affect essential items. Imports from the European Union would continue to be taxed at 15 percent, as at present, so as not to jolt the economy.

The minister did not give details on estimated tax evasion but said the government was considering setting up a fiscal authority to coordinate government sectors which collect revenue. The authority would also fight the black economy and promote fiscal morality.

As a first step a commission for fiscal morality was being formed to educate people on the need to pay their taxes.

While we seek to instil this new culture, the government will step up its direct efforts at fighting tax evasion, the minister said. (Reuter)

New IMF Mission Arrives in Moscow

MOSCOW - A new mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is in Moscow to analyze the performance of the parlous Russian economy, with the continued release of a $10 billion loan at stake.

IMF representative in Moscow Tom Wolf said the team would begin talks Wednesday with Russian officials and stay here until January 24 or 25.

IMF headquarters would then be advised whether to unfreeze three monthly installments of the loan and amounting to just over one billion dollars.

Two 340 million-dollar payments, for November and December, were frozen because of the problems the russian government was having in improving its collecting. A decision on the January installment has yet to be taken.

Wolf said that even if the mission gave a positive report, the recommendation would only be for the release of one of the installments for the time being.

The IMF team would also be negotiating with the Russian authorities on its main economic targets for 1997 in connection

(Contd on Pg.14)

BA Sees American Deal on Track Despite Euro Row

LONDON — British Airways Chief Executive Robert Ayling said on Tuesday he remained confident that BA and American Airlines could complete the IR alliance by the summer despite disagreements with European regulators.

The deal .. "is planned to be implemented during the course of the early summer of this year and I see no reason why it should not be possible to achieve that timetable," Ayling said in an interview on BBC radio news.

On Monday European Commission sources said Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert had told Britain the European Union executive would not tolerate British approval of the deal if it conflicted with the Commission's own views.

In a letter sent to British Trade Secretary Ian Lang's department on Friday, Van Miert said the Commission would defend its view in the European Court of Justice if necessary.

Asked how he felt about this apparent EU challenge to Britain's proposals to conditionally approve the deal, Ayling said: "I remain optimistic that we can get through this and get approval."

While Lang's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) declined comment as it had not yet seen the letter and had not yet given its own final ruling on the deal, Ayling said it was too early to say that the regulators would end up in conflict.

In December Lang proposed conditions for allowing the alliance to go ahead, including a demand that the companies release a total of 168 weekly runway slots at London Heathrow Airport to make room for more competition.

But according to one EU source, Van Miert said in his letter that 168 slots would not be enough to ensure adequate competition — the commission would want a figure nearer 300 to 400 and these slots would have to be surrendered, not sold.

Ayling said he thought the Commissioner's reported claims that the plan would substantially restrict competition on all routes between Britain and the United States were wrongly based.

Karel Van Miert's analysis is based on the assumption that there will be no new air services agreement between Britain and the United States whereas we, the British government and the American government have all made it clear that there had to be open skies agreement, he said.

Ayling said BA and AMR Corp's had made clear that their entire plan was conditional on an open skies agreement being sealed between Britain and the United States.

In addition, he said, it seemed too soon to predict the regulators' final positions.

I can't believe that the Commission has reached a final conclusion yet, as only yesterday we submitted a 146-page paper explaining the reasons why this agreement, with an open skies treaty, would be extremely competitive, he said.

Asked if he feared the threat of legal action by Brussels, the BA chief, whose background is in corporate law, added:"I think the issue as to whether Lang or Van Miert should regulate this matter, although difficult, is something that can be resolved without going to court. But if it has to go to court, it would still be possible for the agreement to be approved."

The European Commission is conducting its own investigation but does not expect to give a ruling before April, which has prompted industry speculation that a showdown over who has final say over the alliance may prove unavoidable. (Reuter)

Thirty-Two Bankers in Egypt Charged in Scandal

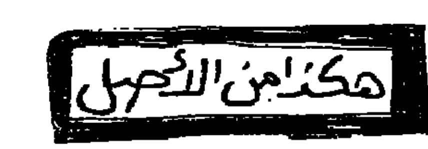
CAIRO, Egypt — Authorities on Tuesday charged 32 bankers and their clients, who include four members of parliament, with corruption in a banking scandal involving $ 295 million.

Egypt's Prosecutor-General Ragaa El-Araby El-Araby told reporters that the 32 had been charged with 'seizing and purposefully harming public money'. He said officials at four privately-owned banks - Dakahliya, El-Nile, Suez Canal and Islamic Faisal banks - were accused of providing clients with loans without proper collateral.

The charged bankers are mostly chairmen or board members.

El-Araby did not say how man of the bankers' clients have been charged, but press reports put their number at 20.

The investigation in the banking scandal started nearly two years. El-Araby did not give a date for the trial. (AP)



Denmark's Queen Celebrates 25 Years as Popular Regent

COPENHAGEN -- Denmark's Queen Margrethe II celebrates the 25th anniversary of her coronation on January 15, basking in the huge popularity she has earned by keeping scandal-free and remaining above the political fray.

It was on a wintry morning in January 1972 that Crown Princess Margrethe Alexandrine Thorhildur Ingrid was, at age 31, declared regent of the oldest monarchy in the world, dating back more than a thousand years.

More than 100,000 Danes braved the cold to stand outside the Christiansborg Castle to salute their new queen, dressed in black and with tears in her eyes, as she succeeded her father, King Frederik IX, who had died the previous day.

A quarter of a century later, the 56-year old monarch still remains enthusiastic about her role.

"I intend to remain on the throne until I fall. It is an obligation that I will fulfil until the end," she said recently.

Her eldest son, Frederik, 28, will thus have his patience tested before he can expect to take over the reins of an uninterrupted dynasty which has seen 50 kings and two queens, and was founded by the Viking chief Harald.

The queen has no real powers under Denmark's constitution, even though she presides over some 15 formal cabinet meetings each year, signs legislation and officially names ministers and heads of government.

Despite her apolitical role as head of state, Queen Margrethe is keenly interested in politics and social problems and expresses her opinions skillfully, especially in her traditional New Year's address.

"She is without doubt the best educated monarch in the history of the kingdom, and one who has known, throughout her 25 years, how to be the model of a modern queen," Social Democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen said recently.

According to him, "The sovereign is an essential part of Denmark's identity, a unifying force for the whole kingdom."

Danes' appreciation of their queen borders on worship, and attribute this to the fact that she has brought new blood to an ageing monarchy, adapting it to the times.

Her subjects even pardon her vices, such as smoking in public and the outspokenness she displayed when she slammed Danes for their "stupid racism" in a New Year's address.

"I feel that I am always supported by everyone, not only by my family," she said.

The vast majority of Danes and the country's politicians, except for the former communists, are fierce supporters of the monarchy and its regent, who they say is an "intelligent person, sensitive, and of undeniable artistic talent (she is a painter, theater costume designer, translator and decorator), all of which earn her respect."

"The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the break-up of the Eastern Bloc were the events that most marked" the queen during her 25 years on the throne.

"Events that were historic. The joy that we felt when Eastern Europe was liberated remains anchored in our hearts and souls," she has said.

The queen's popularity has remained strong because she has managed to remain above the political fray, and free of scandal.

"When I compare what my colleagues abroad are exposed to, I think we live two steps away from paradise," the queen said recently, referring to the problems which have plagued the British royal family in recent years.

The rare mini-scandals of the Danish royals have centered on Crown Prince Frederik's -- and his father Prince Henrik's -- speeding habits, and the boyhood pranks of Frederik and his brother Joachim a dozen years ago when they disrupted a school party. (AFP)

"She is without doubt the best educated monarch in the history of the kingdom, and one who has known, throughout her 25 years, how to be the model of a modern queen."



LA GRANDE MOTTE, France (January 13): Belgian balloonist Wim Verstraeten (R) and Swiss psychiatrist Bertrand Piccard arrive early January 13 in the port of La Grande Motte, southern France after they ditched at sea and were picked up by a French customs launch. The two men, who had left Chateau d'Oex in the Swiss Alps January 12, were hoping to fly around the world in their balloon. They were forced to abandon the attempt by a kerosene leak. (AFP PHOTO)

Wanta Great 50th Bash? Celebrate With the Queen

LONDON -- Couples at a loss for ways to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversaries could make a royal bash of it, according to a Reuter report.

Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip, who mark their 50th wedding anniversary later this year, will hold a special garden party for other golden wedding couples, Buckingham Palace announced recently.

The palace invited couples married in 1947 to apply for invitations to the party, to be held on July 15 at Buckingham Palace in London.

A total of 8,000 invitations (4,000 couples) to this garden party will be available, the palace said in a statement.

It said applications must be made through the office of the Lord-Lieutenants, the local representatives of the queen in each British county.

The queen and Prince Philip were married at Westminster Abbey on November 20, 1947, when she was 21 and he 26.

Their four children have not followed in their footsteps so far as long-lived marriages are concerned. Three of them -- Charles, Anne and Andrew -- have been divorced. The youngest, Edward, is single.

Meanwhile, according to an AFP report from New York, the Duchess of York will be putting her much-publicized battle of the bulge to work as spokeswoman for Weight Watchers, according to sources familiar with the deal.

Sources said the debt-ridden ex-wife of Britain's Prince Andrew would be signing the deal as a spokeswoman for the organization, a unit of the Heinz Group.

Tabloid newspapers said Fergie could make as much as $1 million a year in her new job. No member of the British royal family has ever been known to have been a spokesman for a commercial product.

The duchess' New York public relations firm refused comment on the Weight Watchers role, but did say Fergie was in the United States to shoot a fruit commercial for ocean spray cranberry juice.

The duchess insisted that the commercial not be aired in Britain, according to a friend of the duchess cited by press association. (Dispatches)

India Explores New Population Strategies

NEW DELHI, India -- India has deemed the direct approach to population control a failure, but policy makers say that coming up with new solutions to the complex problem has been difficult.

"It's a question of trying out tactics and strategies," said J.C. Pant, who last month retired as federal health and family welfare secretary. "The results will come in a year's time, or two year's time. If we persist in that direction, we will get results."

Pant was speaking to a meeting in New Delhi of the International Board of Directors of the Population Council, a private research group that helped persuade the Indian government to move away from sterilization as its main means of controlling a population now at 930 million and increasing by about 17 million every year.

Campaigns that began in India in the 1950s set targets for the number of men and women who underwent sterilization, and even encouraged competition between "sterilization camps."

Bureaucrats under pressure to perform resorted to making up statistics, undermining the campaign's credibility, population council researchers said in a recent report. The emphasis on targets and numbers became more important than helping Indians understand why they should limit family size.

India's population grew at an average of 1.96 percent a year in the 1950s; the figure increased to more than 2 percent in the 1970s despite the sterilization program.

But in the 1980s, when the government launched programs to improve the health of women and children, the rate of growth dropped to 1.93 percent, Pant said.

Planners realized that families are less likely to have too many children if they believe their off-spring have a good chance of survival. Infant mortality began to drop because healthier women were giving birth to healthier babies, and because immunizations against childhood diseases and other care for toddlers was available under the new health programs. (AP)

Hero's Widow Faces Marriage Hitch

BLANTYRE -- Relatives of Deputy Health Minister Catherine Chipembere, widow of Malawian political hero Henry Chipembere, have blocked her from remarrying because she wants to keep her late husband's name, a family spokesman said recently.

Catherine was due to marry Alford Marama in an Anglican church on Christmas Day, but Chipembere's relatives forced a postponement of the wedding, said family spokesman Peter Rashid.

"We are not against her new marriage but we stopped the wedding because we want her to stop using the name Chipembere," said Rashid.

"We cannot allow people to exploit the dead body of Henry Chipembere for personal and political benefits."

Henry Chipembere was one of six cabinet ministers who fell out with former President Kamuzu Banda shortly after independence from Britain in 1964.

He fled into exile and led an abortive armed struggle against Banda's regime before moving to the United States where he died -- allegedly poisoned by Banda's agents.

Catherine returned to Malawi in 1994 after Banda was ousted in elections, and was appointed deputy minister by President Bakili Muluzi. (AFP)

Teenage Is Vietnam's First Death Sentence in 1997

HANOI -- A teenage murderer has become the first person to be sentenced to death in Vietnam in 1997, following more than 100 death sentences last year, press reports said Tuesday.

Phuong Xuan Hoang, 18, was sentenced by the Hanoi People's Court on Saturday after being convicted of the murder last February of a 19-year-old female student, the *Thanh Nien* newspaper said.

The girl was killed with a hammer after coming across Hoang during a break-in. The man was caught in Ho Chi Minh City, in the south, after a one-month police hunt in a case which was widely reported here.

In 1996 Vietnamese courts sentenced 113 people to death, an increase on previous years, after more severe guidelines were issued on sentencing for murder, drug trafficking and corruption cases. (AFP)

Hundreds of Gannets Swept Away by Cyclone

NELSON, New Zealand -- Hundreds of gannet chicks have been swept away by Cyclone Drena which swept past New Zealand at the weekend, killing one person.

Ornithologists at Farewell Spit, at the top of the South Island, witnessed the whipped up tide hit the birds.

Henk Heinekamp of the ornithological society said only five of 126 nests were left at the colony.

"It was very traumatic. It's just getting through to me now," Heinekamp said.

"The tide rose at the same time as the cyclone must have gone through Cook Strait, and the waves went over the top of the nests. The adults flew off and the chicks were washed into the water," he said.

"There's one chick there which I reckon we ought to give a medal. He climbed back up three times after being washed off and was sitting on top of the colony when we left."

Heinekamp said the fluffy white chicks were about four to five weeks old and were being hit by waves from both sides of the Spit on Saturday. (AFP)

Weekly Fined for Dead Mitterrand Pictures

PARIS -- The illustrated weekly *Paris-Match* was fined 100,000 francs ($19,000) recently for publishing two pictures of the late French President Francois Mitterrand taken on his death bed by a person who has never been identified.

The magazine's director-general, Roger Therond, was also ordered to pay a symbolic franc to the late President's widow and his three children, but a Paris court rejected a demand that the magazine publish the court's decisions on its front page.

Paris-Match published the pictures on January 25 last year, shortly after the president's death. (AFP)

Chirac Sticks Up for Traditional Baguette

PARIS -- French President Jacques Chirac recently defended the traditional baguette, the long crispy loaf that is a symbol of France, saying that mass-produced bread was unChristian.

Chirac was speaking at an annual ceremony when self-employed bakers and pastry-cooks present him with a twelfth night cake.

"I am utterly determined to support your profession," said Chirac, receiving a delegation headed by Jean Cabut, president of the National Confederation of Bakers.

Cabut said he feared court action from a government decision to regulate use of the sign "boulangerie" (bakery) outside bakers' shops.

Since the beginning of the year only craftsmen who have kneaded their own dough and baked it in their own oven can use the sign "boulangerie."

Chirac said it was "unthinkable to compare bread produced by a bakery to this stuff that comes out of cooking terminals that looks like anything but bread and nc even a Christian food."

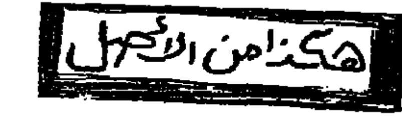
The government move wa aimed at protecting craftsme bakers who face competition fro supermarket bread made out c frozen industrial dough.

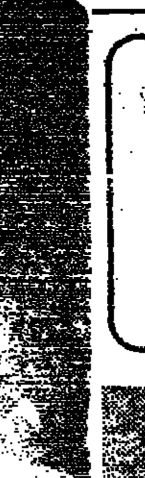
Chirac said that legal actio against the government decr would fail, adding that he was pr pared to introduce a bill to prote the traditional baguette, regard by some French people as an e dangered national monument.

Craftsmen bakers ha launched a campaign to restore a petite for traditional bread afte collapse in consumption to 1 grams (6 oz.) per person per d from 900 grams at the turn of century. One French child in t never eats any bread.

Miller Philippe Viron, aut of "*Vive la Baguette*", has defi the criteria of the perfect bagu

"It should be golden, brow top. Its crust is crispy and it sh sound like a drum. And it fla the palette with its slightly-c melized hazel-nut flavor." (A















Headfirst Publicly Funded Natural Medicine Clinic in the United States

WASHINTON — Georgy Gazhenko has suffered from chronic back and leg pain for nearly a quarter-century, the legacy of years of hard labor on a Soviet farm collective.

In both his native Ukraine and the United States, where he has lived for five years, Gazhenko tried - with minimal results - a number of painkilling medications, injections and physical therapy.

He began to believe back surgery was his only option.

"I was desperate," Gazhenko says through an interpreter. "I had a lot of pain. I could not stand for 10 minutes. "

However, even surgery carries no guarantees, so Gazhenko sought an alternative at the King County natural medicine clinic at the Kent Community Health Center in this community between Seattle and Tacoma.

In selecting the clinic, Gazhenko became part of an experiment in health-care delivery that locals hope will make Kent the "natural medicine" capital of the world.

"We want people to see that natural medicine works, that it's cost-effective," said Mark Bresnick, project manager for the clinic.

The county clinic, which opened in November, is the nation's first publicly funded natural medicine clinic, he said.

Its mission is to provide a combination of conventional Western medicine and natural alternatives to low-income, immigrant and refugee populations, said Bresnick, who also is director of Bastyr University's natural health clinic in Seattle.

Bastyr, an accredited natural medicine university, is leading the two-year, $1. 2 million project here in collaboration with the private, nonprofit community health centers of King County, which is the Kent clinic's parent group, and the Statistics and Epidemiology Research Corp., which is evaluating the program.

The Seattle-King County Department of Public Health is providing the public funding for the project, which includes $750,000 in startup money from the state. The community health centers of King County's six community health centers provide referrals to the natural medicine clinic.

The waiting room in the Kent health center, which is open to everyone, can be like a tiny United Nations. There are patients from Russia, Ukraine, Mexico, Bulgaria, Vietnam, Korea, Thailand, Somalia and other countries, receptionist Robin Karrick said.

Gazhenko is here to see Augusto Romano, a licensed acupuncturist originally from Italy.

Stripped down to his shorts, Gazhenko stretches out on his stomach atop a padded massage table. Romano deftly eases several acupuncture needles into Gazhenko's back for pain relief. Then he places small cups over the needles to create suction on the back and draw out toxins. After several minutes, he removes the needles and cups and ends the session with some light massage.

"The way I work is systemic," Romano said. "The goal is to teach the body balance, to get better circulation and produce endorphins. "

He sends Gazhenko home with some chinese herbs to help him sleep.

Gazhenko, 59, isn't cured after five visits with Romano. But his pain has been significantly reduced, and he no longer needs a cane to walk.

"People choose natural medicine for many reasons," said Dr.

Cindy breed, a naturopath who works at the clinic and also has a private practice. "Some people want to address things in a natural way before turning to drugs and surgery. "

Staff at the six family-practice health centers have identified certain ailments that must receive conventional primary care, including stroke, acute hypertension, bone fractures, prenatal care, and newborn and infant care through two months.

At the same time, the centers suggest patients consider a naturopathic consultation for such conditions as ear infections, food allergies, migraines, asthma, premenstrual syndrome, enlarged prostate and ulcers.

"In some instances, one is better than the other," Breed said.

"Sometimes people need surgery, but in all cases natural remedies can be supportive. "

There is plenty of room for both conventional medicine and natural medicine in the healing arts, said Merrily Manthey, a stress-management consultant and a member of the city task force that helped secure the natural medicine clinic for Kent.

Although still in its infancy, the clinic is expected to be popular with patients. A health-centers survey showed 60 percent of patients were interested in natural medicine options.

In addition to offering health-care choices that are rarely available to the poor, the clinic is an experiment for doctors.

One factor that will be evaluated after two years is the extent to which natural therapies are adopted by conventionally trained physicians, said Dr. Marty Ross, medical director of the community health centers of King County and a member of the Kent health center staff.

These doctors' responses to the natural-medicine clinic option have ranged from "excitement to upset," he said.

Ross himself is enthusiastic, saying "we can all learn from each other. "

The American Medical Association is open but skeptical to the subject of alternative therapies, said its president, Daniel Johnson, a diagnostic radiologist in a New Orleans suburb.

The AMA supports federal research into the science of natural medicine. Doctors want what is most effective for their patients, whether it's ancient or high-tech, he said.

"Rather than take any kind of pejorative position, we support accumulating good information about what works best. That applies as much to alternative treatments as it does to mainstream medicine," Johnson said.

(AP)

Location of Mutation Determines Cancer Gene's Effect

NEW YORK — The disease-causing effects of a recently discovered breast cancer gene depend on where the gene is mutated, British scientists have found.

The researchers showed that mutations toward the middle of the brca2 gene, discovered in 1995, predispose a woman more to ovarian than breast cancer.

That finding could help refine genetic tests, making them better predictors of whether a woman with a family history of breast cancer will get the disease.

"Clinically, it's possible that it could be a very important finding," said Simon Gayther, a research scientist at Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge, England.

Gayther and seven colleagues identified 22 brca2 mutations among 25 families with histories of breast or ovarian cancer. When they looked at the specific location of each mutation within the gene, they found that damage near the ends of the gene tended to cause breast cancer.

But damage in a region near the middle of the gene caused more ovarian than breast cancers.

"This observation may ultimately be important in the counseling of women at risk of cancer due to brca2," Gayther and his colleagues write in a paper describing their work. They report their results in the January issue of *Nature Genetics*.

"It's certainly interesting and hopefully will open up some new doors, because right now it's really difficult to figure out what's going on," said Andrew Futreal, a professor at the Duke University medical center in Durham, north Carolina.

In previous studies, Gayther and his colleagues found a similar effect in the brca1 gene, also linked to breast and ovarian cancer.

Although inherited genes are not the predominant cause of breast cancer, accounting for only 5 percent to 10 percent of all cases, they may hold clues to how the disease develops generally.

In one set of families that the researchers studied, those with mutations in the middle part of the brca2 gene were more prone to ovarian than breast cancer. Mutations in the middle part of the gene produced 23 ovarian cancers, compared to 18 breast cancers.

But among those with mutations outside the middle region, there were 91 breast cancers and only one ovarian cancer. Another group of families produced a similar result.

Scientists don't know yet how the effect is produced. Mutations in the middle of the brca2 gene could increase the risk of ovarian cancer, decrease breast cancer risk, or do both at once.

It will probably take years to figure that out, Gayther said, as researchers try to determine what the brca2 gene does and how it increases cancer risk.

"At the moment, there's absolutely nothing known about the function of brca2," Gayther said. "In the end, it's just a question of piecing all these bits of information together and trying to find the whole story. "

(AP)

SCRABBLE BRAND GRAMS

H4 D2 A1 E1 S1 S1 J8 — Triple Word Score — RACK 1

R1 R1 R1 E1 O1 D2 B3 — Double Word Score — RACK 2

H4 P3 I1 A1 I1 S1 R1 — RACK 3

K5 N1 I1 I1 D2 S1 R1 — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 90-100

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL ____
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7- letter word from the letters in each row. To total points of your words, use scoring directions to right of each row. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words can be found in OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

2-2-96

Here is the solution to yesterday's Scrabble

SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION BY JUDD

H4 F1 R1 O1 I1 S1 M3	RACK 1 = 62
L1 O1 W4 E1 S1 T1	RACK 2 = 9
M3 A1 Y4 H4 E1 M3	RACK 3 = 24
R1 E1 V4 O1 L1 T1 S1	RACK 4 = 70
PAR SCORE 105-115	JUDD'S TOTAL 165

2-1-96

Ripley's Believe It or Not!

FEMALE ROCKFISH GIVE BIRTH TO OVER TWO MILLION BABIES AT A TIME!

BILL Clark of Jonesboro, Ark., FILED A PATENT for a DEVICE THAT EMBOSSES NUMBERS ON SOCKS TO ASSIST IN SORTING THEM WHEN THEY COME OUT OF THE DRYER

ESPRESSO STOUT

Believe It or Not

A COMPANY in Washington, D.C., HAS DEVELOPED A COFFEE-FLAVORED BEER!

3-2

THOUGHT

Never be frightened by those you assume have more talent than you do, because in the end energy will prevail. My formula is: energy plus talent and you are a king; energy and no talent and you are still a prince; talent and no energy and you are a pauper.

JEFFREY ARCHER

Prayer is the price of heaven.

PRAYER

Noon 12:14
Evening 17:37
Dawn (tomorrow) 5:36
Sunrise (tomorrow) 7:13

Smoking May Be Harmful to Your Looks

LONDON — Medical researchers studying some 50 pairs of identical twins — one who smokes, one who doesn't — concluded that smoking makes you look older, sooner.

It does that by thinning the skin at an accelerated rate, bringing on the telltale wrinkles and sagging of the aging process at a significantly earlier age in the smoker than in the non-smoker, said the study.

In fact, according to the doctors at the twin research unit of London's St. Thomas' Hospital, the smoking twins were found to have skin as much as 40 percent thinner than the non-smoking sibling.

The researchers said they did not set out to study the effects of smoking, but noticed them in the course of a study on twins to identify the genes behind a variety of diseases.

Since identical twins share many of the same genes, they said, they should age at the same rate unless affected by external factors.

Among more than 1,000 pairs of twins of various ages, about 50 were found where one had been a lifelong smoker and the other had never smoked.

Using ultrasound to gauge skin thickness on the inner arm, they found on average that the smoking twins had skin 25 percent thinner than the non-smokers, with differences up to 40 percent.

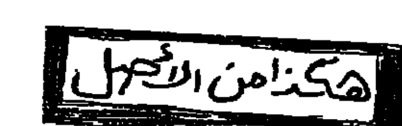
"It's always been known from observation that smoking makes you age more quickly, but this has never been demonstrated in much scientific detail before," said Tim Spector, the doctor who heads the unit.

"Doctors say they can recognize smokers' faces because they look more wrinkled and haggard," he said.

Spector said the reasons for the accelerated thinning had not yet been pinpointed, but said they could involve release by smoking of an enzyme in the skin which breaks down collagen and elastic tissue, or damage to genetic material in the skin.

"The message from this research is, before you take up smoking think whether you want to look much older than you are and have weaker and more wrinkly skin," he said.

(AFP)



Time Running Out for Milosevic

BELGRADE — Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic appears to have given ground to opposition demands for recognition of local election victories but needs to take more explicit action to defuse the political crisis he has created, analysts say.

He is now caught between an angry West, hardliners in his own ranks and opposition leaders who are raising their demands buoyed by 55 days of successful demonstrations, diplomats and independent local analysts in Belgrade said.

We may be seeing a beginning of the end of the crisis. I suspect it will be messy and not clear-cut, a senior Western diplomat told Reuters.

The opposition Zajedno (together) coalition claimed to have won 14 of Serbia's 18 largest cities including the capital Belgrade in the second round of local elections on November 17.

Milosevic's socialists (SPA) annulled the victories, triggering a wave of daily street protests, now in their eighth week, by Zajedno supporters — the most serious challenge to leftist rule in Serbia that dates back to 1945.

The move also prompted an outcry in the West and in Montenegro, Serbia's only remaining partner in federal Yugoslavia, which voiced extreme discontent with Milosevic's handling of the matter and vowed to defend its own interests.

Milosevic also alienated all other traditional sources of support — the army, the church and intellectual circles — while the specter of renewed international sanctions and more economic collapse threatens to spark labor discontent.

Against such a backdrop, political sources said Milosevic was expected to publicly acknowledge opposition election victories and call for a coalition government.

A decision to uphold Zajedno's election victories was made at a meeting on Friday of senior SPS and neo-Communist Yugoslav United Left (JUL) officials, a political source said.

But neither Milosevic or any of his close aides have made that acknowledgement public in the form of a flat statement.

Analysts believe the SPS and JUL are trying to save face by passing the buck to the government, whose two deputy prime ministers met student leaders on Saturday.

The two upheld all student demands, including full restoration of Zajedno's poll victories, and criticized hardliners in their own ranks as well as the state media, an unprecedented move from a government member.

The authorities seem to be preparing a parachute-like descent from their lofty position, to avoid crashing down in total disarray, the Western diplomat said.

They're engaged in as much face-saving as possible, dealing as much as possible with the students and not Zajedno.

Meanwhile Zajedno leaders, riding a wave of unprecedented popularity, have raised the stakes by saying they will not stop until Milosevic goes.



They accused Milosevic of scheming to outmaneuver the opposition with piecemeal concessions that would not affect the decades-old authoritarian grip of the SPS and refused to enter a coalition government.

Milosevic must make a clear-cut stand, let Zajedno celebrate victory and clear streets of protesters, reshuffle the government, open the media and prepare a new image if he wants to survive, the senior political source said.

In the meantime, time was running out as the West closed in, promising more punishment for Milosevic's shattered economy.

U.S. assistant secretary of state John Kornblum said that Washington was considering a unilateral freeze on new trade deals and official relations to put pressure on Milosevic to acknowledge the opposition victories.

(Reuter)

Divided Italian Center-Right to Meet on Reform

ROME — Opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi sought to patch up cracks in his center-right bloc and salvage a cross-party deal on constitutional reform designed to make Italy's government more effective and durable.

Berlusconi returned home at the weekend from a Caribbean holiday to find signs of mutiny from his chief ally, hard-right leader Gianfranco Fini, over a planned bicameral commission to work out changes to Italy's outdated 1948 constitution.

Fini has backed a proposal by ex-President Francesco Cossiga to wreck a key vote on the commission in the Senate (Upper House) and force a referendum in favor of creating a constituent assembly to tackle the reforms instead.

Berlusconi, who has negotiated closely with Massimo d'Alema, leader of the biggest party in Prime Minister Romano Prodi's center-left government, summoned his freedom alliance partners for a vote to endorse a unified position.

If they vote yes, the bicameral committee will go through.

Otherwise I think the bicameral committee won't be approved, said D'Alema, the body's main sponsor and likely chairman.

The real problem is that there is... a crisis in the opposition which is struggling to give itself a strategy, a leadership, said D'Alema, head of the ex-Communist Democratic Party of the left.

Both Houses of Parliament voted in favor of a bicameral commission last summer but must do so a second time before the 70-member body can begin work.

The Senate vote will be followed by a vote in chamber of deputies on January 21. Change requires a two-thirds majority of members of Parliament.

Publio Fiori, a senior hard-right deputy, warned that the bicameral committee would be the end of the freedom alliance unless it won guarantees on what reforms would be tackled, including a commitment to presidential-style government.

The bicameral commission would be born but the freedom alliance would die because an unbreachable rupture would clearly emerge between two ways of conceiving politics and interpreting the drive to change the country, he said.

D'Alema ruled out giving anyone any guarantees.

Everyone comes to the commission with their own proposals, they present them, they are discussed and agreement is sought, he said. We're adults, not children.

Italian politicians have been discussing reforms to their postwar constitution for 15 years but without real progress.

Many commentators hoped the huge corruption scandals that felled the old ruling elite in the early 1990s would bring swift reform but little has been done. Prodi's government, the 55th since the war, says it has an historic duty to achieve reform.

Now we need goodwill, commitment and enthusiasm from everyone, said Senate speaker Nicola Mancino.

Separatist leader Umberto Bossi, who wants secession for northern Italy, has accused Berlusconi of supporting Prodi in exchange for who knows what in return for his media empire.

The bicameral commission is just about keeping the Prodi government on its feet, it's got nothing to do with reform, he said.

(Reuter)

Spain's Gil Robles Favorite for Euro-Parliament

STRASBOURG, France — Spanish Conservative Jose Maria Gil Robles looked certain to be elected speaker of the European Parliament following a pact between the assembly's two biggest groups, parliamentary sources said.

Gil Robles' European Popular Party (PPE), and the European Socialist Party of the current speaker, Klaus Haensch of Germany, have agreed to alternate in the job every two and a half years. Together, they control 397 of the 626 seats.

French parliamentarian Catherine Lalumiere of the Radical European Alliance (ARE) is also a candidate for speaker.

Gil Robles, 61, is a member of Spain's ruling Popular Party (PP). He is a son of Jose Maria Gil Robles who founded the Spanish confederation of autonomous rights and was a war minister before the 1936-39 civil war. (Reuter)

Prince Alexander Ready to Don the Crown of Yugoslavia

LONDON — For Alexander Karadjordje, "1997 could be my great, great breakthrough," the year he ascends the throne of Yugoslavia that his family was forced to abandon after the World War II.

Prince Alexander, 51, sees the street demonstrations taking place in Belgrade daily as his best chance yet of becoming King Alexander II of Yugoslavia.

Great, great grandson of Queen Victoria, Godson of Queen Elizabeth II, the heir to the throne of the 200-year Karadjordje dynasty has lived his entire life in exile, twice married, with three sons.

Forced out by the Germans, his father, King Peter II, fled to asylum in Britain.

Peter was intent on safeguarding his first-born's right to the throne of Yugoslavia. But that would require the boy to have been born on Yugoslav soil.

Problem, the family was living in London at the time, and Alexander was born in a suite at Claridge's Hotel. So, at King Peter's request, the British government declared the Claridge's suite to be Yugoslav territory on July 17, 1945, the day Alexander was born, and the little prince was baptized in due course in nearby Westminster Abbey.

King George VI and his daughter, Princess Elizabeth, stood as the prince's godparents.

Today, Alexander, smiling and plump in an immaculately tailored navy blue suit, holds forth in a small office in central London's Park Lane — a stone's throw from his birthplace.

He runs his campaign for the throne with one assistant, and the inspiration of a portrait of his late father in full-dress uniform that dominates the premises.

"I am on several financial boards of well-know companies," he said in an interview, explaining the source of his daily bread.

Having lived in France, Switzerland and the United States, the pretender to the throne never really believed in his royal destiny until the collapse of communism.

"I would not have thought that the Berlin Wall would come down," he said.

But today, watching the shakiness of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's grip on power, Prince Alexander is "very optimistic."

"My chances are pretty good," he says, stressing that his family is Central Europe's only royal dynasty not to have been "imported" from abroad.

"The greater majority of the people in the street, including the students, are very much in favor of monarchy," he said.

When it is pointed out that the demonstrators who march in Belgrade daily neglect to mention his name, Alexander retaliates that his portrait is often in evidence there, and that his speeches are read to the crowds.

Alexander has already been to Yugoslavia three times, and, although he has not yet mastered the Serbo-Croat language, he insists he was always "very well received."

He says he has "been in touch with opposition leaders since the beginning," and that they have shown "great support and sympathy for the monarchy."

At least one of the opposition leaders, Vuk Draskovic, recently told the London daily *Telegraph* he would be favorable to the return of the monarchy "if the people want it," a condition which does not, Alexander points out, mean a referendum.

Today, "the time has come for Mr. Milosevic to retire," says the prince. "He has no concept of democracy or basic human rights. This will have to come to an end."

As soon as that happens, he explains, "the opposition must form a caretaker government. ... (and) the Parliament would revoke the 1947 law (which ended the reign with the advent of communism), and the monarchy would be resuscitated."

Alexander is ready to hop on the first plane for Belgrade.

"It might be a question of days," he says.

He sees himself taking his place as monarch, playing the role of "mediator" among political adversaries "along the line of the Spanish system" of his cousin, King Juan Carlos, who ascended the throne in Madrid with the death of Franco.

"I could play an important role in bringing democracy to the country," he insists.

Should that happen, his kingdom would be somewhat smaller than the one ruled by his father, who reigned as well over the Slovenians, the Croats and the Bosnians.

Alexander does not discount the possibility that one day, the Serbian portion of Bosnia will return to Belgrade. But "one must respect everybody's rights."

After the Dayton accords, which set the borders of the former Yugoslavia, "we need a Dayton two to set in motion the democratic reforms and economic revival," said Alexander.

Meanwhile, he exhorted the opposition "to continue their effort, not to give up, and to go for the downfall of the government."

"The monarchy might be a solution for Bulgaria and Romania," he observes. "It's one of the major ways of bringing about democracy." (AFP)

Bosnian Croat War Crimes Suspect Gets Easier Detention Terms

THE HAGUE — The UN war crimes court has relaxed detention conditions for Bosnian Croat General Tihomir Blaskic, who is awaiting trial on war crimes charges, a court statement said.

Blaskic was commander of Bosnian Croat forces (HVO) who massacred about 100 Muslim civilians, and is accused of other war crimes committed between January 1993 and April 1994. He pleads not guilty to the charges.

Blaskic, who turned himself in "voluntarily" to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in April 1996, is not being detained at the icty's prison in Scheveningue near The Hague as other indicted war criminals are.

He is being held at an undisclosed location elsewhere in the Netherlands where he had already been allowed to use the telephone, watch television and spend one night per month with his wife.

Last Thursday, ICTY chairman Antonio Cassese agreed to a new request for easier detention conditions submitted by Blaskic's lawyers on December 5.

He was granted "seven hours of fresh air per week, to take on the balcony and not the garden" at his place of detention, and he can exercise for two hours a day "in the lounge."

Those detained at the Scheveningue Prison are entitled to a total of only two hours a day of fresh air and exercise combined.

Blaskic is also allowed to use the lounge every day from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm and his wife and children may visit him "up to seven consecutive days a month."

However, the prisoner's toilet privileges have remained unchanged. Court guards will continue to monitor his use of the toilet for security reasons.

Last month, the ICTY rejected a one million mark ($650,000) offer of bail by Blaskic's lawyers for his conditional release. The tr[ial] originally set to start on January 8, had been adjourned indefinitely.

(AFP)

Opposition Labour Set for Commons Majority of Up to 40

LONDON — A Labour majority of between 21 and 40 seats in the House of Commons is the predicted outcome after the imminent British general election, according to a poll published Tuesday by Bookmakers' Ladbrokes.

Tony Blair's Party have maintained a 19 percent lead over the ruling Tories for the last three months and are 1/6 favorites to win the most seats in the election, which must be held before May 22, said the poll.

Prime Minister John Major's Party is at 7/2 to gain the most seats — the longest price for the Tories since the 1992 election.

And a hung Parliament, where no party has an overall majority, is a firm possibility at 5/1.

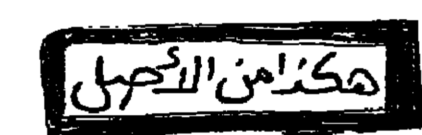
The survey, carried out for Ladbrokes by Opinion Research Business (ORB), used a range of sources of information, including poll data, input from election experts and an assessment of historic trends in voting behavior.

Pollsters have started to adjust their figures since 1992 when most surveys exaggerated the Labour vote before the last election.

Tuesday's poll took into account the past voting behavior of many Tories who claimed they "didn't know" or "refused" to disclose their intentions. The unadjusted findings gave Labour an even larger 23 percent lead.

The findings will help the betting industry set their odds for the election in which they expect to handle six million pounds ($10 million) as punters take a flutter on the outcome.

ORB interviewed a random sample of 1,816 respondents face-to-face in their homes between January 2-5. (AFP)



Egypt Hopes Desert Irrigation Scheme to Be Panacea

CAIRO — The Egyptian government has found a national project to unite the people behind it, but some Egyptians say they still need convincing that its desert irrigation scheme is a panacea for all the country's ills.

President Hosni Mubarak, opening the project to Channel Nile water into the western desert, used the expression national project five times in a 15-minute speech, leaving no doubt about how he views its role as a force to mobilize the nation.

"We are witnessing a giant national project and future necessities require that the efforts of all Egyptians be united for its success," Mubarak told the country's elite at a windswept construction site 700 km (435 miles) south of Cairo.

He was speaking on the banks of the lake behind the Aswan High Dam, where bulldozers are already clearing the way for what will be the world's largest pumping station.

Within about four years the water will wind its way across the western desert, irrigating at least 500,000 acres (200,000 hectares) of virgin land to be settled by millions of people.

The government is describing it as the project of the 21st century — the only way to relieve the demographic pressure on the crowded Nile Valley and Delta.

Mubarak's enthusiasm for the project has taken the country by surprise and not everyone is sure this is the national project they need, or even if Egypt needs a national project at all.

"We are not against national projects," said Gamal Badawi, historian and editor in chief of *Al-Wafd*. newspaper, the mouthpiece of the opposition Wafd Party.

"(But) all the fears are that this project will turn out to be of the same type as Mudiriyet al-Tahrir...particularly as we have not heard about it before," Badawi told Reuters.

The comparison was with a desert reclamation scheme launched by socialist President Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1960s with fanfares similar to those heralding Mubarak's project.

The Tahrir (liberation) Project — the very name resonates with the optimism of the period — was no great disaster but it did not transform Egypt the way the propagandists had promised.

But Mubarak has dismissed all criticism of the project, saying it is either misguided or perverse.

"We have groups who oppose absolutely any step forward. Whenever someone says something, we (Egyptians) have to come out and say 'no, no, no' — the forces that are against any development," he said in an interview on state television.

Intellectual Salama Ahmed Salama said he rejected the idea of a national project that did not change the attitudes of ordinary Egyptians or that perpetuated elitism.

"I am not an advocate of merely having a national project," said Salama, a prominent columnist and managing editor of the government newspaper *Al-Ahram*.

"Any major scheme...should lead to the liberation of the Egyptians from all negative attitudes," he told Reuters.

"There is no benefit from new societies if economic and political situations remain unchanged," he added.

"Any scheme that does not succeed in attracting the silent majority...is not a national project," he said. "It should convince this majority that this country is theirs, not the property of a ruling elite or a political party."

Magdi Ahmed Hussein, editor of the Islamist opposition newspaper *Al-Shaab*, said he objected most to the hullabaloo about the project, which he sees as politically motivated.

"The worst thing is that the publicity is similar to that of totalitarian regimes. The state is trying to win prestige and dignity in front of people," he told Reuters on Monday.

"We get an impression that the government wants a big achievement to support it and make it shine. So the project has political dimensions, more than economic. Let the achievement speak for itself," he added.

Even at the construction site at Toshka, some of those taking part in the work looked at the rapid progress of the project with some cynicism about the motives of their masters.

"I think they (the government) wanted to build the concept in Egyptians that we should have this national project and that we all should be thinking about a central target," said one of the senior officials, who asked not to be named.

He said the contractors had started work at the site in haste in readiness for the inauguration by Mubarak.

"Our president was here a few months ago and he gave instructions that he'll be here this month and he'll see the excavations," added the official.

(Reuter)



MOSCOW, Russian Federation (January 11): People fishing through holes in the ice of the river Moskva use the aid of plastic bags to protect themselves from the freezing winds, in central Moscow. *(AFP PHOTO)*

Indian Lepers Sew for the "Saint of the Gutters"

TITAGARH, India — Nearly 1,200 lepers once banished from Indian society have found comfort and peace in this small town near Calcutta, running an industry dedicated to their "saint of the gutters," Mother Teresa.

The lepers, some of them ravaged by their affliction, and their families have developed a weaving center aimed at supporting the order of the Nobel Peace prize laureate who they see as their savior.

"We pray for Mother Teresa two times a day because she is the roof over our heads," said Katrina, a 45-year-old leper who has been an inmate for 16 years.

Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity started working in Titagarh in 1952 and established the center, which it still finances, in 1958.

"She is (the) incarnation of a real mother — somebody who gave these people hope beyond hope, when everybody else rejected them."

"She is our god who looks after our well-being everyday. If she dies, who will take care of us?" she said as she sat at one of the 50 looms which produce 6,000 blue-trimmed sarees a year for the nuns of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity Order.

The center also produces all the bed and table linen used in 600 homes, centers and hospices run by her in 126 countries, as well as the furniture used in the order's Calcutta headquarters.

Sisters of the order are arriving at the headquarters this week to decide if ailing Mother Teresa should stay on as head of the order she founded 50 years ago.

While insiders say that the fragile missionary would be forced to relinquish her leadership, many residents of her center at Titagarh will be dismayed to see her step down.

The white and blue-tiled institution, built on the site where a shanty town for lepers stood for two centuries, is manned exclusively by lepers and their relatives — down to the fingerless watch guards who are unable to do any other work.

Its residents say the 86-year-old nun gave them a unique chance of living a life in which they are not reviled by society, and believe that she watches over them.

"She is (the) incarnation of a real mother — somebody who gave these people hope beyond hope, when everybody else rejected them," said Brother Vinod, who heads the complex set on 3.5 hectares (nine acres) and sandwiched between railway tracks and a garbage dump.

"For them it is an oasis in a cruel world which said they were invalids and less than human beings," Brother Vinod said in this small town 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Calcutta.

"As Mother Teresa puts it, their suffering is five-fold — mental, physical, financial, social and spiritual."

Brother Vinod, who has served three terms as head of the center named after Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non- violence who personally ministered to lepers to rid society of its prejudices, said a sea-change had occurred in society over the years.

"In 1958, an inmate went out to drink tea and had boiling hot water poured on him by the tea-shop owner," he explained.

"Now our children go to local schools and our residents go to town for a meal or to watch films,

"In 1958, an inmate went out to drink tea and had boiling hot water poured on him by the tea-shop owner. Now our children go to local schools and our residents go to town for a meal or to watch films, just like you and me."

just like you and me," he said.

Shibdhari Das, a guard at one of the center's many gates, said locals treated him and his fellow-workers with respect.

"... We do our duty overtime, so there has never been any crime of any sort (against us) here."

Brother Anand, a priest who visits the center every year, said it felt more like a self-contained village than an institution, boasting ponds, a creche and its own fish and poultry.

"Everything that is used here is made here, including artificial hands and feet and special rubber shoes. They are made by the people who use them," he said.

"The only outsiders who come here regularly are doctors for operations and social workers who come to teach the children and sometimes counsel the workers."

Each day at Titagarh starts early with residents joining in an eclectic prayer which draws passages from the Bible, the Muslim Quran and the ancient Hindu text of the Bhagwad Gita, Anand said.

But Mungheri, a severely mutilated inmate who found refuge in Titagarh after being kicked out of her home by her husband, said she only knew one prayer.

"It is something Mother Teresa told me many years ago. She said 'Smile, God loves you'."

(AFP)

Water Level of Lake Michigan the Highest in Nine Years

CHICAGO — Lake Michigan has risen to its highest level in nine years because of increasing rain and snow, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers predicting that this could last at least through June.

The *Chicago Sun Times* reported recently that homeowners along Chicago's famed Lake Shore Drive were watching the situation with alarm.

"Our membership is starting to get pretty agitated," Bill Andersen, a member of the property owners group International Great Lakes Coalition, was quoted as saying.

In 1986 and early 1987, houses collapsed, buildings shook, garages flooded, small beaches virtually disappeared and larger ones narrowed drastically during record high lake levels.

In February 1987, winds of 100 kilometers (60 miles) per hour and seven-meter (20-foot) waves flooded Lake Shore Drive with 60 centimeters (two feet) of water.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers forecast that the level of the 57,980 square-kilometer (22,300 square-mile) Lake Michigan would remain more than 30 centimeters (one foot) above average at least through June.

But the lake is still 35 centimeters (14 inches) below the record for January set in 1987.

Lake Michigan is the third largest of the five great lakes and the only one to be wholly in the Unites States. The others are shared with Canada.

(AFP)

Chagas Disease Kills 43,000 People a Year Across Americas

WASHINGTON — A health risk across Central and South America, bug-borne Chagas disease still kills some 43,000 people a year, even though eradication and education programs are showing some success, the Pan-American Health Organization says.

Chagas is transmitted by the simultaneous biting and excreting of the reduvid bug, also known as the vinchuca or barbeiro.

The nocturnal so-called "kissing bug" tends to live in homes with dirt floors, and can be carried by opossums. Over time, it leads to heart failure but shows few immediate symptoms.

Educational programs have helped decrease transmission somewhat but between 16-18 million people have been infected, and another 43,000 will die this year, the regional branch of the World Heath Organization said.

Many scientists believe half of Bolivia's population is infected.

In much of South America's southern cone, however, programs that began in 1991, including fumigation and upgrading homes, have begun to bear fruit.

Authorities now expect the disease may die out in 1997 in Uruguay, in 1998 in Chile and by 2,000 in Argentina and Brazil, said Gabriel Schmunis, the PAHO's infectious diseases program director.

But in Central America, the incidence of the disease remains alarmingly high.

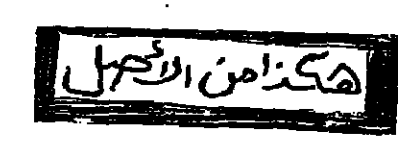
A recent study found that 300,000 people were infected in Honduras, or six percent of the population, and that 20 percent of them would likely die of the disease.

The parasite trypanosoma cruzi, which causes the disease, can be eliminated from the bloodstream with the drugs nifurtimox, nitroimidazol or benzonidazol if treatment is begun immediately after infection according to PAHO epidemiologoist Fabio Zicker.

The biggest problem, Zicker said, is that only in rare cases do people have a reaction and seek medical help shortly after infection. Most go for 10-20 years without seeking help, and by then the disease has produced incurable injury to the heart, intestines or nervous system.

Chagas disease, identified by Brazilian Carlos Chagas in 1909, is also known as tripanosomiasis americana as it so far only has been detected in the Americas. It can be passed from mother to child, and through blood transfusions.

But tripanosoma cruzi belongs to the same family as another famous one-cell parasite, tripanosoma gambiense. *(AFP)*





Albright, Annan Discuss UN Reform Prospects in Farewell Call


ANNAN

UNITED NATIONS — Madeleine Albright and Kofi Annan discussed UN reform prospects when the outgoing U.S. ambassador paid a farewell call on the new UN secretary-general, both sides said.

U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative Edward Gnehm told reporters after the "very warm" half-hour meeting that Albright and Annan recognized that reform in general and the UN financial situation were "a problem that needed a solution."

Fred Eckhard, Annan's spokesman, said the reform issue was discussed in the context of the new UN chief's planned trip to Washington next week, during which he is to meet separately with U.S. President Bill Clinton and members of Congress.

Albright, who is awaiting Senate confirmation to become the next U.S. secretary of state, informed Annan that Clinton would ask Congress for payment of some arrears to the world body in his budget proposals to be presented next month.

But Gnehm refused to comment on a report in *Washington Post* which said that Clinton would propose holding back the payment of $900 million until 1999 as a lever to ensure that Annan carried out substantial reform.

The United States is the biggest UN contributor but also its largest debtor. It owes roughly half of the $2.2 billion owed to the world body by member states.

Annan told Albright that in addition to demands from Washington for reform, he also had to take into account the concerns of developing nations in the 185-member General Assembly.


ALBRIGHT

Gnehm played down differences between Annan and the Clinton administration on reform. Annan is rejecting "arbitrary staff cuts" and "disjointed downsizing" while Washington insists that the UN bureaucracy needs to be pared.

Gnehm said that a difference in perspective between Washington and New York "is something that I recognize as a fact of life."

Annan, a Ghanaian, took office as UN chief on January 1 but worked closely with Albright over the past four years as undersecretary general responsible for peacekeeping. (AFP)

Clinton to Ask Congress to Pay UN Dues

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton will ask Congress to pay off more than $1 billion of the U.S. debt to the United Nations, and to increase foreign affairs spending, the *Washington Post* said.

The UN dues would be appropriated but held back to press for UN-backed reforms in the international organization, administration officials and congressional sources told the daily.

In addition to the UN dues, Clinton will ask legislators to authorize an increase in foreign affairs spending and foreign aid by about $1.2 billion above this year's level of 18.1 billion, the sources said.

Clinton's proposals are included in his federal budget for fiscal 1998 — beginning in October — that he is planning to send to Congress on February 6.

White House spokesman Michael McCurry refused to confirm the *Post* report. But he said Clinton "has a very strong interest in meeting the obligations we have at the United Nations."

Officials told the *Post* that the spending plan reflects Clinton's view that international spending


CLINTON

has been pared back too much and that further cuts would undermine U.S. ability to carry out effective diplomacy.

The plan represents a success for Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his designated successor Madeleine Albright, who have been arguing that sacrificing foreign spending on the altar of balancing the U.S. budget would put U.S. national interests at risk.

On Monday a task force of Washington's foreign policy establishment issued a report urging Clinton to take funding for international affairs off the chopping block.

The report endorsed by three former secretaries of state among other prominent Americans was the latest in a string of distress signals over the plight of U.S. diplomacy.

That report followed a plea to senators last week by Albright who said adequate funding of foreign affairs would help the United States maintain its leadership role.

Funding for foreign affairs has dropped 20 percent since the early 1990s, forcing the State Department to close about 30 consulates and embassies in the past three years.

The plan by Congress and Clinton to balance the budget by 2002 would translate into a deeper cut of 30 percent, according to the task force sponsored by the brookings institution and the council on foreign relations, two prestigious think tanks.

The report included a recommendation to settle the U.S. debt to the United Nations — currently $1.3 billion, which the task force said should be paid in installments of $200 million spread over five or six years. (AFP)

Doctors File Suit to Protect Right to Recommend Marijuana

LOS ANGELES — A group of doctors and patients in California filed suit to block the federal government from taking punitive action against doctors who recommend medical use of marijuana.

The suit was lodged on constitutional freedom of speech issues that plaintiffs said were jeopardized by penalizing doctors who recommend marijuana for terminally and seriously ill patients.

"The threats against doctors have worked," said Graham Boyd, an attorney representing the California doctors, four patients and others in a class actions suit against the Federal government.

"The White House has achieved its goals," he said, lamenting that many doctors, scared of facing court action and losing their licenses, have opted not to tell patients that they could benefit from using marijuana.

He said that doctors are legally bound to tell patients of all available remedies for their ailments, but the government has prevented that and inserted itself in the doctor-patient relationship.

"This is pushing doctors into an untenable position of having to break the law in order to comply with the government policy," Boyd told reporters here shortly after the lawsuit was filed in San Francisco.

For at least two decades, hundreds of physicians in California have recommended marijuana, often as a medicine of last resort, to seriously ill patients suffering from cancer, AIDS and glaucoma.

Although patients have long faced state criminal liability if they obtained marijuana for medical purposes, authorities rarely cracked down on the patients or their doctors.

But the passage of Proposition 215 in California and a similar one in Arizona has made the practice high profile at a time President Bill Clinton's administration insists it is getting tough on drugs.

The lawsuit names drug Czar General Barry McCaffrey, Attorney General Janet Reno, drug enforcement agency director Thomas Constantine and Donna Shalala, secretary of health and human services.

McCaffrey recently announced that while the government could not roll back Proposition 215 it could, under federal law, go after doctors who recommend the use of marijuana.

McCaffrey and other administration officials contend that the two initiatives represent a significant threat to the nation's drug-control strategy.

They have complained that a time when drug use, especially marijuana, is rising among teenagers, the California and Arizona initiatives send the message that marijuana is not only harmless but may even be beneficial.

Plaintiff Keith Vines, a 46-year-old AIDS patient, former air force captain and now an assistant district attorney in San Francisco, said marijuana relieved him from AIDS' deadly "wasting syndrome."

He said that he lost 20 kilos (45 pounds) and was so weak he was unable to sit on a chair before at the recommendation of his doctor he began taking a growth drug in combination with marijuana, which spurred his appetite.

"I have been a footsoldier in the war on drugs," he said. "But this is different for people like me who need marijuana, not to get high, but to stay healthy."

Dr. Marcus Conanat, 60, who has practiced medicine for 33 years in San Francisco and has the largest private AIDS practice in the United States is a leading proponent of medical marijuana use.

He said he knows that the Federal government is looking for someone high-profile like himself to make an example of, and he is being circumspect. He said the policy has had a "chilling effect" on his colleagues.

"They ask me what to do and I tell them, 'be careful,'" he said.

He dismissed as Spurious McCaffrey's offer to spend $1 million studying the medicinal effect of marijuana, noting the study would be done on literature already published on the issue.

But he said there have not been any studies commissioned that compare subjects who use marijuana and those who do not because the government will not sell marijuana for study purposes to researchers. (AFP)

China's Top Educator Warns School Spending Is Slipping



BEIJING — China's top educator has warned that overall state spending on education is slipping, despite a 14 percent increase in 1996, the *China Daily* reported.

Minister of the State Education Commission, Zhu Kaixuan told a national conference that the ratio of education spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) had slipped further in 1996.

He did not say what the 1996 ratio was, but the 1995 figure was 2.46 percent, down from 2.52 percent in 1994 and 2.77 percent in 1993.

China's education spending is notoriously low compared to the 4.1 percent of GDP which is the average for a developing country.

"Educational and financial departments across the country must prevent a possible slide in education spending in 1997," Zhu told the conference.

"Departments must work harder," he added.

China spent 214 billion yuan ($25.8 billion) on education in 1996, up 14 percent on the previous year. (AFP)

UN Human Rights Monitors Attacked in Northwestern Rwanda

KIGALI, Rwanda — UN human rights monitors working in northwestern Rwanda were attacked and their vehicle blown up with a grenade, a spokeswoman said. No injuries were reported.

The four-member team was attacked Monday in Giciye, 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Kigali, an area known for Hutu militant activities. A regional hospital in Kabaya, 5 kilometers (3 miles) south of Giciye, was attacked and looted Saturday night.

UN aid agencies suspended operations in the area Tuesday.

Rwandan troops were reportedly deployed to search for the unidentified armed group of men.

"The team was in the home of the local mayor when an unidentified group of armed men came to the house," said Marie Van Der Elst, spokeswoman for the UN human rights field operation in Rwanda. "The men ordered the team to leave the area and they left on foot."

Two investigators, a Briton and an Italian, were accompanied by a translator and a driver, both Rwandans.

After they left, the attackers destroyed the monitors' UN vehicle.

It wasn't clear if the aid workers were the intended target of the attack. Their work in Rwanda, however, is to gather evidence that could lead to prosecutions for the 1994 genocide of over a half-million people.

Van Der Elst said investigators would not comment on possible suspects.

Investigators visited the area Tuesday, but details were unavailable, Van Der Elst said.

The status of the local mayor was unknown. Hutu militants regularly assassinate local officials in a bid to destabilize Rwanda's new Tutsi-controlled government.

Attacks in northwestern Rwanda have increased in recent weeks after more than one million Hutu refugees returned from Zaire and Tanzania where they had been living in refugee camps since mid-1994.

They fled Rwanda fearing reprisals for the massacres by Hutu extremists of more than 500,000 Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus.

The influx over the past three months has increased tensions between genocide survivors who fear the return of Hutu militants and returnees who fear retaliation for the 1994 genocide. (AP)

UN Chief Shocked by Burundian Army Massacre

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed shock at a massacre of refugees by Burundian soldiers, and called for an end to the "cycle of violence" in the Central African state.

In a statement read by his spokesman Fred Eckhard at a news briefing, Annan strongly urged Burundian authorities "to ensure that the rule of law is scrupulously followed and to prevent further massacres by the army." A total 122 Hutu refugees were killed late Friday by soldiers from the Tutsi-led Burundian Army at the Kobero border post in northeastern Burundi as they returned from camps in Tanzania.

The Burundian regime, which is dominated by members of the ethnic Tutsi minority, has accused Tanzania of harboring Hutu rebels who fled camps in eastern Zaire during a Tutsi rebellion there.

Annan said Friday's killings underscored the "pressing need for an immediate cease-fire" between the ethnic groups in Burundi and for broad-based peace talks which would "put an end to this abhorrent cycle of violence whose first victims are the innocent civilian population."

Burundi has continued to be wracked by ethnic violence following the July 25 coup d'etat which installed Pierre Buyoya, who belongs to the Tutsi elite, as head of state. (AFP)

Fourth National Gathering on Mosque Plays

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Friday Jan. 3, 1997, the warm-hearted people of Ahvaz were hosts to mosque artists from different parts of the country.

The artists, who from the beginning of the current year, formed role-playing groups to introduce themselves in the province, took part in a national gathering to try their abilities.

As the first aim of the gathering, the host artists threw flowers on the graveyards of Behesht-e Shohaday-e Ahvaz (Graveyard of Ahvazi Martyrs). Attending Friday prayer and performing the plays of 'Abazar' from Ahvaz and 'Oora Sada Bezan' (Call Him) from Tehran in the Art Bureau and City Hall marked the end of the first day of the gathering.

In the gathering, held by Art Bureau and with the cooperation of Ahvaz Steel Company, some 18 plays from the cities of Ahvaz, Tehran, Kerman, Ghorveh, Yazd, Shahr-e Ray, Zahedan, Ardebil, Mashhad, Qom, Karaj and dezfoul were on the menu.

Three plays were performed in two sections of 'Young Experiences' and 'Religious Plays' each day during the gathering.

Following the performances were criticisms launched by the experts in the field gathered together at a session to discuss ways of using religious themes in the plays and specialized ways of performing plays.

Last week the gathering wound up it work giving prizes to the selected groups and directors: Abouzar Group received the first prize in music, and Mahdi Lotfabadi was selected as the best child actor.

Also Majid Vahedzadeh was selected as the best play director and Ghodratollah Fathi stood second.

The judges decided no play was the best to receive the first prize of the gathering.

First Seminar and Exhibition on Qoran Held in Sri Lanka

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The First Grand Seminar and Exhibition on Qoran was held this month in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with the participation of some prominent Sri Lankan scientific and cultural personalities as well as government officials, a report faxed to the daily said.

Attendant in the seminar were Sri Lankan minister of ports and shipping, deputy chairman of National Parliament Committee, deputy minister of press, deputy minister of post and telegraph as well as Sri Lankan National Parliament members.

According to the fax, some topics discussed in the seminar were: Social Justice From the View Point of Qoran, Impossibility of Distortion of the Holy Qoran, The Prophet's Personality in Qoran, The Present Status of the World of Islam, and Propagation Bombardment on Islamic Countries.

The seminar wound up its work giving awards to the selected Islamic calligraphers of the National Calligraphy Competitions, held by the cultural attache of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Colombo.

Dr. Tafazzoli Dies in Accident

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Dr. Ahmad Tafazzoli, the permanent member and deputy of Persian Language and Culture *Farhangestan* (Cultural Center) died in an accident early this week, newspapers reported yesterday.

He received his B.A in Farsi Language and Literature from Tehran University, his M.A. in Culture and Ancient Languages from London University, and his P.h.D. in the same course from Tehran University.

He was very popular in the field of ancient languages.

Dr. Tafazzoli received the Year Book prize in 1990 for his translation of *"The First Human Being and the First King in the Mythical History of Iran"* written by Christian Saint.

He was a prominent literary personality in Iran. The *Tehran Times* expresses its condolences on the death of Dr. Tafazzoli to his bereaved family and mournful literary and cultural society.

Supplication of Kumayl

(10)

So by Your Might,
my Master and my Protector,
I swear sincerely,
if You leave me with speech,
I will lament before You from the midst
of the Fire's inhabitants
with the lamentation of the hopeful;
I will cry to You with the cry
of those crying for help;
I will weep before You with the weeping
of the bereft; and I will call upon You,
"Where are You, O Sponsor of the believers,
O Goal of the hopes of Your knowers!
O Aid of those who seek assistance,
O Friend of the hearts
of the sincere, and
O Allah of all the world's inhabitants!"
Can't You see Yourself — Glory be to You
my Allah, and Yours is the praise —
hearing within the Fire the voice
of a slave surrendered to You,
imprisoned there because of his violations,
suffering the pangs of its torment
because of his disobedience, and
confined within its levels
because of his sin and crime,
while he laments before You with the
lament of one hopeful for Your Mercy,
calls upon You with the tongue
of those who profess Your Oneness
and entreats You by Your Lordship?





THE FACE

Tehran Times Service

Director: Siroos Alvand

Cast: Abolfazl Pourarab, Atefeh Razavi, Sa'id Poursamimi, etc.



Synopsis

TEHRAN — Some kith and kins in a family gathering run into a stranger guest, Engineer Fereydoon Behnam. Fereydoon has recently come back from the United States and is going to raise a small town in north of Iran. Soraya, reverend Colonel Mavaddat's daughter, and Fereydoon gradually become more acquainted with each other and finally he pops the question to her. Their marriage is registered officially, but still Fereydoon lives in the hotel. Later, he asks the relatives to share the land purchase which costs some 700 million rials. But as soon as the money is deposited into his account he runs away with the money. Families accuse one another. Meanwhile, Fereydoon makes several phone calls to Soraya to convince her to go abroad with him, but all in vain. While the dispute is at fever pitch and Soraya is accused of being an accomplice, Fereydoon goes home with disguised appearance several times, and eventually returns the money.

Critique

Siroos Alvand is an experienced film director who usually makes use of those elements in his movies that are attractive enough for the moviegoers. This stereotyped aspect is quite transparent in *The Face*. Giving roles to actors, widely known for the moviegoers, a simple film script without any intricacy in the plot, perfect filming, gaudy locations, beach resorts, the latest-model fashionable autos all and all are solid evidences of the above said stereotyped aspects.

The first mistake stems from the film script. It lacks good characterization. Introducing a group of different characters has made the scriptwriting very easy for the writer. The first actor, Fereydoon, doesn't enjoy a proper social status. Everybody wonders where he has come from and why he is dwelling in a hotel. He is a thief in need of money and yet he is too extravagant. He owns a resort in north, drives a latest model car but his mother lives in a slum in the southern part of Tehran. He suddenly happens to be the family's son-in-law. He pretends to be an advocate of Erish Frome's safe society, but in fact he is no more than a swindler.

The old story of "from rags to riches" has its manifestation in films such as *Ganje Qaroon* (Qaroon's Treasure) which is the most important of all, looks like Indian stories and *The Face* confesses frankly it's the same as public-luring *Ganje Qaroon*.

The same problem still remains about the other characters. Although characters like ex-colonel, ex-journalist, ex-teacher, ex-sportsman are believed to be materialistic, the whole story wants to picture a materialistic way of thinking in the characters more or less examples of the last regime. But even this characterization effort remains superficial so the characters cannot communicate well and lack individual and social personality.

The Face, because it is stereotyped, is superficial and nonartistic, and compared to Alvand's *Once Forever*, a step backward, eventhough it enjoys a good director as well as a good structure.

Largest Library in West Tehran Open to Public

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The largest library of west Tehran, containing some 20,000 books on science, culture, society and politics, inaugurated recently.

According to a fax from Ma'refat *Farhangsara* (cultural house), the library is fully mechanized and is linked with other national libraries via computer.

The library includes two separate study halls for male and female book readers and is open to the public from eight in the morning until ten at night, the fax said.

The fax also revealed that another large library with a capacity of 30,000 books is under construction in District Five of municipality urban divisions in Ferdous St. by the municipality of the district. It is predicted that the construction team finish its work by the end of 1997.

Sierra Leon Radio Broadcasts Iranian Reciter's Voice

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Sierra Leon state radio has started broadcasting verses from the Holy Qoran with the voice of Iranian famous Qoran reciter, Seyed Morteza Sadat Fatemi, since the beginning of Ramazan.

According to a fax from Public Affairs Department of Islamic Culture and Communications Organization, the radio broadcasts the recitation of Holy Qoran every day one hour before the noon time call for prayer.

Also in Sierra Leon, the one-month-long Qoranic classes is being held by the cultural attache of the Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy.

The daily classes are scheduled to be in the afternoon in the conference hall of the cultural attache.

Siberian Cinema Sets Ticket Price in Empty Bottles and Eggs

MOSCOW — A movie theater in a hard-pressed Siberian village refuses to let a lack of cash keep poor farmers away. First it began accepting eggs, but then eggs ran short and it set the ticket price in empty bottles.

Many farm workers in the settlement of Klyuchi in southern Siberia haven't been paid in months and are unable to come up with the price of a movie ticket, even at 800 rubles or about 15 U.S. cents.

In November, the desperate cinema began selling tickets for two eggs a piece.

The practice caught on throughout the Altai region, and movie theaters were packed during t[he] New Year and Russian Orthodo[x] Christmas holidays.

But in Klyuchi the eggs-for-tickets plan hit a snag.

"Hens lay fewer eggs durin[g] the winter, and the village seem[s] to be running out of eggs, so th[e] cinema workers have decided t[o] go further and accept empty bo[t]tles as well," the ITAR-TAS[S] news agency reported Saturday.

"The new way of payment [is] especially popular among [...] young people," it said.

(AP)

Italian Tenor Alvinio Misciano Found Dead After Fall

MILAN, Italy — Italian tenor Alvinio Misciano, who once taught opera superstar Luciano Pavarotti, was found dead after falling from a third-floor window at his home here, relatives said last week.

Misciano, 83, apparently suffered a dizzy spell while standing next to the window in his apartment. He was found dead last Friday.

Misciano performed in major operas by Rossini, Puccini, Verdi and Massenet during the 1950s and '60s at top venues such as La Scala in Milan, the Metropolitan in New York and the Opera in Paris.

He also sang on numerous occasions at Milan's Piccolo Teatro, where founding director Giorgio Strehler was a keen supporter, and was one of the first tenors to perform on television.

His singing career ended [in] 1977 when he performed the l[...] in Bruno Maderna's Satyricon a[t] Scala.

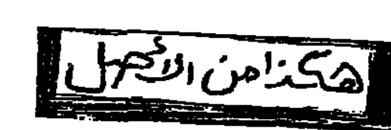
Misciano was responsible [for] forming an entire generation [of] singers, including Pavarotti, w[ith] whom he remained on affection[ate] terms.



On Admiration

Fools admire, but men [of] sense approve.

ALEXANDER PO[PE]
Essay on Criticis[m]



International Spectrum
A Glance at International Events



Tehran Times Weekend Issue
THU., JAN. 16; DAY 27, 1375; RAMAZAN 6, 1417

Iran Spectrum
A Glance at National Events

The World This Week

World in Highlight

Wednesday, January 8

Five More European Nations as Al-Khalil Observers

Israeli and Palestinian officials together invited five countries to join the observer force in the West Bank city of Al-Khalil with the expected withdrawal of Israeli forces from most of areas.

Iraq Smashes Israeli Spy Ring



Iraq announced that it has dismantled an espionage ring working for Israel and would broadcast the confessions of the 'traitors'.

U.S. Diplomat Arrives in Kabul

A U.S. diplomat has made a brief visit to the Afghan capital, the first American official to come here since Taleban militant captured the city three months ago.

Russia Links Accord With NATO to New Deal on CFE

Russia will ink an accord on its future relations with NATO contigent on changes to the conventional forces in Treaty with Europe, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said.

Thursday, January 9

Russian Security Chief Urges Efforts to Keep Chechnya in Russia



Russian Security Chief Ivan Rybkin presses on Chechnya being part of Russia in terms of politics and economics 'despite the wounds inflicted upon it by the war'.

Norwegian Troops Arrive in Bosnia

A contingent of 140 Norwegian soldiers arrived in Sarajevo to begin security duties at bases used by the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR).

Turkey Renews Threat of Attack on Cyprus in Defiance of U.S.

Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller on Friday renewed Turkey's warning of a possible attack on Cyprus over its planned deployment of long-range missiles despite a U.S. call to refrain from threatening the island.

Panamanians Protest Against U.S. Military Presence

Hundreds of protesters staged a noisy demonstration against U.S. military presence in Panama on the 33rd anniversary of bloody anti-U. S. riots.

Friday, January 10

Israeli-Hezbollah Clashes Flare Up



An international Committee monitoring a ceasefire accord in South Lebanon met at Israel's request after rockets hit its territory this week.

Belgrade Demonstrators Win Back Streets



Student demonstrators marched in triumph through the streets of central Belgrade as riot police unexpectedly abandoned a face off with them.

Bulgarian Protesters Clash With Police



Protesters demanding early elections clashed with police outside the Bulgarian parliament leaving at least five people injured.

Syria Rejects Islamic Group's Claim

Syria dismissed a claim by an Islamist group that it carried out a bus attack in Damascus to avenge the execution in Syria of one of its activists.

Saturday, January 11

Ross, Arafat Meet Mubarak in Egypt



U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat held separate talks with President Hosni Mubarak to discuss the stalled negotiations over Al-Khalil.

Serbian Government Orders Review of Poll



The Serbian government ordered the local electoral commissions and courts to probe into the November 17 local election results won by the opposition but awarded to the ruling Socialist Party.

U.S. Responsible for Theft of Millions of Dollars

The United States will have to answer for the theft of hundreds of millions of dollars stolen by Cuban emigres to the U.S., the president of Cuban parliament said.

Ramadhan, the Month of Fasting, Prayers and Purification



Al Aqsa Mosque in Bait Al Moqaddas.



Worshiprers outside a mosque in a street of marseille.

Muslims around the world who started observing fast last week, gave more prominence to the attendance of congregational prayers.

Sunday, January 12

Taleban to Hold Peace Talks With Rival Leaders Monday

A close aide to Afghanistan's Taleban militia chief, Mulla Mohammad Omar, arrived in Islamabad for talks with rival faction leaders aimed at ending the war in Afghanistan.

EU Envoy Meets Israelis Over Al-Khalil Deadlock

The European Union's special Middle East envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, met with senior Israeli officials to discuss the deadlocked Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Israeli-Palestinian Talks Break Down



The United States special envoy Dennis Ross decided to return to Washington after failing to broker an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians on extending self-rule in the West Bank.

Bulgarian Protestors Prepare For Fresh Demonstrations

Opponents of the former communist government in Bulgaria began a third day of street protests to press demands for early legislative elections, as unions pledged to call a general strike.

Monday, January 13

Bahrain Blames Qatar for Failure to Defuse Dispute

Bahrain blamed Qatar for the failure of a meeting in Riyadh by Persian Gulf Arab foreign ministers who tried to defuse a decades-old territorial dispute between the neighbors.

Priests, Nuns Lead Mass Candlelight Protest in Support of Workers

Some 200 Catholic priests and nuns shouting 'down with (President) Kim Young-Sam' led unionized workers in a dramatic candlelight protest on the eve of a massive strike against a new labor law.

Tuesday, January 14

Spaniard Elected Next European Parliament Speaker

Spanish Christian Democrat Jose Maria Gil Robles was elected as the next president of the European Parliament, to succeed German socialist Klaus Haensch for a two-and-a-half year term.

Unaccompanied Children Arrive From Saudi Arabia

Seventy-six unaccompanied girls, some as young as 6 and many disabled, arrived in India on a flight from Saudi Arabia, leaving authorities in Bombay with a mystery to solve and a welfare crisis.

Iran in Highlight

Wednesday, January 8

Leader: Mosque, Bastion of Religion, Wisdom and National Resistance



The Leader of Islamic Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei underlined the decisive role played by mosques in leading great Islamic movements of the world to victory.

Mirsalim Calls For Exploring Palestinian Resistance Culture

Minister of Islamic Guidance Mostafa Mirsalim in a meeting with Palestinian ambassador to Tehran underlined the need for a precise study of the Palestinian people's resistance culture.

Thursday, January 9

Italy Can Become Iran's Biggest Trade Partner



Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati in an interview with Italian news agency *ANSA* said Italy can become Iran's largest trade, economic and political partner.

President Inspects Some Projects in Kish Island

President Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani inspected some infrastructure projects on Kish island including a 14-stroy administrative and commerce tower-building, a grand hotel and an international university.

Friday, January 10

U.S. Fails to Block Iran's Development: Rafsanjani



On the eve of the holy month of Ramadhan, addressing the congregational Friday Prayer worshipers at Tehran University campus, President Hojjatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani elaborated on the increasing pace of construction, pointing out that the United States has so far failed in its policy to obstruct the progress of construction in Iran.

Muslims Appreciate Development of Western Countries

Deputy Foreign Minister for Research and Educational Affairs, Abbas Maleki, addressing a congress on 'Islam and the West' said that Muslim attitude is positive towards parts of Western culture and negative towards parts of their behavior.

Saturday, January 11

Private Sector's Investment in Infrastructure, Welcome

Private sector is welcome to invest in infrastructure projects, Road and Transport Minister, Akbar Torkman said.

Tehran Ready to Host Inter-Afghan Meeting

Iran is ready to organize a meeting on Afghanistan with the participation of all Afghan groups including the Taleban militia, adding that "All groups, the legal government as well as the Taleban will be invited to an inter-Afghan meeting to discuss national reconciliation."

Sunday, January 12

Guidance Ministry Supports Journalists' Demand

The Culture and Guidance Ministry of Iran announced that it backs the journalists' request for an early retirement.

Iran, Syria on Middle East Coordinated



The first round of talks between the first Vice President Hassan Habibi and Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam was held in Tehran.

Monday, January 13

Iran's Major Role in Region Cannot be Played Down

The Syrian Vice President Abdul-Halim Khaddam met with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and conveyed an oral message from Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to his Iranian counterpart.

Tuesday, January 14

Visit of Majlis Speaker to Moscow of Great Importance

The First Vice-Speaker of the Russian State Duma Aleksandr Shokhin said that the forthcoming visit of Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri to Russia is of significance.

Seven Ways to Beat Shyness

The 34-year-old La Jolla, Calif., woman lived in constant fear of strangers, whether at parties with her husband or at school functions with her three children. "I endured these events," she says, "by keeping as quiet as possible, not looking anyone in the eye, and just waiting for the hour when I could go home. I felt others saw how uncomfortable I was." Today this woman has learned to overcome her shyness, using techniques found to be successful in countless cases. She has a circle of friends and she's active in the PTA. And she now realized that she wasn't alone in her problem.

Often mistakenly regarded as a childhood stage that people outgrow, shyness is surprisingly widespread. Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford University psychologist, co-director of the Shyness Institute and author of *Shyness: What It Is, What to Do About It*, surveyed more than 10,000 people during the 1970s and '80s and found that approximately 40 percent of this sample described themselves as shy.

Another study of 1,600 people, conducted by Indiana University Southeast psychologist Bernardo Carducci, places the figure at 48 percent. That could mean that about 117 million people — nearly half of all Americans — are shy. According to Zimbardo, and additional 15 percent of the population is "situationally shy, experiencing shyness in certain stressful circumstances, such as speaking in public." The research indicates that males and females are equally shy.

There may be no "cures" for shyness. However, research is uncovering ways shy people can overcome their problem so it doesn't take such a toll on their happiness. Here's the best of the experts' advice:

1. Use a journal to get to the root of your fears. "A written record is a cheap, effective therapist," says psychotherapist Christopher McCullough, author of *Always at Ease: Overcoming Anxiety and Shyness in Every Situation.* "We know more about ourselves than we think we know, and it's often surprising what comes out when we write done our thoughts and fears."

One of McCullough's former patients, a single woman in her mid-30s, suffered severe shyness about dating. She wrote down everything that happened surrounding a date: getting the phone call, making arrangements to go out, what was said during the date, what was said about future plans," McCullough says, "as well as what she was thinking while all this was going on." Gradually, the woman noticed a recurrent theme. "She was afraid that a man might like her, but she might not like him — and then she wouldn't know how to get out of the relationship."

McCullough explains that they talked about things she could say to men she didn't want to see anymore. "Once she had those tools, dating became much less stressful."

Though the woman was situationally shy — only one aspect of her life, dating, was problematic — a journal can be a helpful tool for the temperamentally shy as well. According to Wellesley College psychologist Jonathan Cheek, author of *Conquering Shyness: A Personalized Approach*, two-thirds of shy people can identify specific events in their lives that contributed to their shyness. Once the cause are identified, says Cheek, "you can deal with them in a constructive way."

2. Create a "character" — an unshy version of yourself — and rehearse your own scenes. Stanford University's Zimbardo tells the story of a 50-year-old woman who found acting to be a solution to her shyness. "I discovered that my embarrassment vanished when I assumed a role in a play," she wrote him. "After all, it wasn't me on the stage. It was a character."

This division of the self into "the real you and the role you," says Zimbardo, is also common among "shy extroverts" — people who appear outgoing in public yet are shy in private. "Approximately 15 percent of those who are shy fit this description."

Many popular entertainers, including Johnny Carson and David Letterman, are shy but feel more at ease when they're onstage or on camera, Zimbardo says. Such successes are why some shy people get involved in community theater, debating societies or Toastmasters. During these activities they can temporarily "be" the unshy person.

Cynthia Finch, director of the Reticence Program at Penn State University, helped a shy student prepare to tell his father that he was leaving the school's ROTC program. "He wrote a 'script' of the conversation he was fearful of, including what he wanted to say, what his father might say, and



how to answer," Finch says. Afterward, she adds, the young man was less hesitant to talk to his father about other subjects that were important to him.

Scripting can be used with role-playing to rehearse for any scene in your life, whether it's asking your boss for a raise or meeting your child's teacher. When you rehearse these encounters, you've prepared what you're going to say, and you will be more confident going into the conversation.

"Shy people are often too concerned with whether or not their actions reflect their real selves," Zimbardo explains. "Like an actor, you must learn to dissolve the boundary between the so-called real you and the role you play. Let your actions speak for themselves and eventually they'll be speaking for you."

3. Do your homework. Bernardo Carducci calls this technique "social reconnaissance." "If you're going to a party," he suggests, "find out who will be there, what they do, what their interests are." If you're making a business presentation to people you haven't met, find out something about their backgrounds. "You'll feel more in control when it comes time to make conversation," he adds.

Another type of homework: look for a group that shares some interest of yours. Marjorie Coburn, director of the Phobia and Anxiety Treatment Center in La Jolla, Calif., helped the 43-year-old woman who was uncomfortable about strangers. Coburn learned that the woman had always wanted to learn to quilt. So at Coburn's suggestion, the woman signed up for a quilting class. There, she was able to talk with others about something she was interested in, even though these people were strangers. Her in-class conversations led to some friendships and socializing outside class. "For the first time," Coburn says, "she actually enjoyed being with people. Moreover, she became less shy in other situations."

4. Change your body language. "Shy people send out signals of coolness or withdrawal, often without realizing it," says psychologist Arthur Wassmer, author of *Making Contact: A Guide to Overcoming Shyness.* "What they're constantly telegraphing is: 'I'm scared, I'm afraid, I'm intimidated.'" Unfortunately, other people don't get those messages. They interpret this body language as aloofness or conceit and stay away, making the shy person feel even more insecure.

"Of all the techniques," Wassmer adds, "simple changes in body language are the most surprising in terms of immediate results. Patients would say to me, 'I had more conversations with people in the last week than I had in the last year!'"

Wassmer uses a one-word reminder to list all the body-language signals that project warmth and likability: SOFTEN. "S" stands for "smile," "O" for "open posture" (legs and arms uncrossed), "F" for "forward lean," "T" for "touch" or friendly physical contact (shaking hands, for example), "E" for "eye contact" and "N" for "nod" (affirming you're listening and understanding). "By softening the image you send out to the world, you'll earn the friendliness and positive responses that make strangers seem less intimidating," Wassmer claims.

Shy people find conversation difficult; they hardly ever speak up because they are too busy worrying about the impression they're making. Researchers have found that to keep a conversation moving along, unshy people instinctively use conversational feedback such as "Yes, I agree" or "How interesting."

When conversation lags, ask open-ended questions such as "How did you get into your line of work?" "Open-ended questions are a signal that you're friendly," says Jonathan Berent, a psychotherapist in Great Neck, N.Y. and author of *Beyond Shyness: How to Conquer Social Anxieties.* "Such questions also keep the focus on the other person — not you."

5. Let others in on your secret. Christopher McCullough once counseled a man who liked his job but dreaded monthly meetings in which he head to participate. He was afraid he'd say something stupid or even panic and run out of the room — and lose his job if he did. Finally he confided his fears to his boss, who told him that he could leave the room if he needed to, that his job was not at risk. "Eventually this calmed the worker down," McCullough says, "and he was able to get through meetings and even participate."

A major complaint of shy people is that their families, friends and even doctors don't take their problem seriously. Marjorie Coburn advises a shy person to find "safe people" who accept their shyness — not those who tell them to come out of their shell. "You want people who'll listen to your fears without making judgments," she emphasizes.

6. Envision the worst-case scenario. Dr. Paul Bohn, former director of the Social and Performance Anxiety Clinic at U.C.L.A., asks patients to discuss their greatest fears in front of fellow shyness-sufferers. For instance, if someone is afraid of giving a speech, he might be asked by the group:

What's the evidence for your fear? "People laughed at me when I was a kid." *What's the evidence against it?* "No one has laughed at me for years." *What's the worst that could happen?* "They'll laugh at me! And what'll happen then? "Either I'll laugh with them, or I'll never come back to speak to the group again." So even the worst-case scenario is hardly the catastrophe that the person had imagined.

One common fear that often does come true is the onset of physical symptoms that sometimes accompany shyness: perspiration, a shaking voice, blushing. Yet research shows that these symptoms aren't nearly as noticeable to others as shy people fear they are.

7. Take small steps. Marjorie Coburn used this technique to help a 35-year-old bookkeeper. The woman wanted to earn an accounting degree but was too shy to take college classes. "She was afraid that she would be called on to speak," she says. "We worked up to her goal gradually."

First, she just walked around a college campus. Next, she signed up for a seminar, sat in the back and didn't speak to anyone. At another seminar, she talked to the person next to her. "Eventually," says Coburn, "she enrolled for a bookkeeping course." If she was called on, she could respond easily, thanks to her own authority on the subject.

Finally the woman enrolled in the accounting program and did so well she was asked to tutor students. "When she took on the role of teacher, her shyness went away," Coburn notes.

IF SHY PEOPLE work *at it*, says Jonathan Cheek, most are able to cope with their problem. "It *is* work," he adds "but it's a battle they can win."

"You're not going to wake up one morning transformed into the life of the party," Cheek continues.

"In fact, you may always feel shy inside. But you'll forge ahead anyway and connect with others. And in doing so, you'll be refusing to stand on the sidelines of life. That's the real victory."

(Courtesy the Reader's Digest)

Entertaining in Style

Prawn and Potato Salad

You will need...	
	1 small can potatoes
	2 tablespoons oil
	salt and pepper
	pinch dry mustard
Preparation time	pinch castor sugar
10 minutes	4 oz. peeled prawns
Cooking time	1 bunch watercress
5 minutes	

Cook the potatoes in their liquid for 5 minutes. Drain while still hot. Put into a dish with the oil, salt, pepper, mustard and sugar. Mix well and leave until cold.

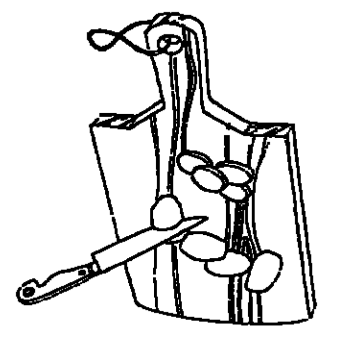
Reserve a few prawns for garnish and add the rest to the potatoes. Mix well.

Pile the potato mixture on a serving plate. Wash the watercress and remove the stalks. Shake dry and arrange on top and round the heap of potatoes and prawns. Garnish with remaining prawns.

Serves 4.

QUICK TIP

If you are using new potatoes, cut them into slices before cooking to make them go further and to shorten the cooking time.



Answer to Last Week's WORD PROBE

Archives	Loft
Armoury	Lumber Room
Arsenal	Magazine
Attic	Museum
Bank	Repository
[illegible]	Reservoir
Basement	Safe
Boxroom	Silo
Cache	Stockroom
Cellar	Storehouse
Depository	Tank
Depot	Treasury
Garden Shed	Vat
Granary	Warehouse
Holder	Well
Larder	Wharf
Library	Yard



Feature

Facets of Countries

Spotlight: Myanmar (Burma)

Colors of the Mountains

Rain may be a nuisance for city dwellers. But for the Dara-ang hilltribe people, it means a promise of life.

The Dara-ang, otherwise known as the Palaung, are indige[illegible]s of Burma whose rich culture [illegible]iking costumes have earned [illegible] the nickname "Colors of the [illegible]tains.

Like the Karens, the Dara-ang—who number about one million in Burma—have been deeply influenced by Buddhism "which is evident in their annual Poi Hua Seen ceremony to welcome the rainy season.

The ceremony is the highlight of Buddhist Lent, which is the period when monks must refrain from traveling and stay at a temple for a three-month long rainy season retreat.

While city Thais have adopted individualistic ceremonies separately going to a temple and giving alms to monks, the celebrations of Buddhist Lent is still a community collaboration for the Dara-ang.

It is indeed a joyful occasion. The singing of the women fill the air as they gather at the village's largest house to prepare offerings several days in advance.

With the big day fast approaching, the women and other villages would usually stop working in the fields to concentrate solely on the preparations.

Everybody in the village is allocated a duty to make sure each one of them earns merit during this important ceremony.

The artisans, for example, are in charge of making animal-headed Tung (similar to the Chinese dragons seen in Chinese New Year celebrations) and umbrella-headed Tung, an elongated, vertical flag which symbolizes a stairway to heaven.

Young men are in charge of collecting bamboo poles from the forest. The big bamboo poles are for tying long Tung flags, and the shorter bamboo poles for smaller Tung.

Twigs are also used to make a traditional tree of offerings called Ton Krua Tan. This is quite similar to central Thailand's tree of offerings for the kathin, or robe-presentation, ceremony.

As for women, they are in charge of weaving the colorful Tung flags. Some may be as long as four meters and they are decorated by small pieces of multi-colored paper.

After a long day of preparation work, nighttime is for fun and relaxation.

People gather around a campfire to sing and dance to the rhythmic beats of drums. This nighttime fun is most looked forward to by the Dara-ang young men and women, as it provides a courting opportunity and a chance to develop a blossoming romance.

The Dara-ang hill people say they have been performing the Poi Hua Seen ceremony for as long as they can remember.

Apart from making merit, the ceremony, they say, is part of their ancestral heritage which they feel obliged to continue and pass on to the younger generations.

Buddhism is part of Dara-ang everyday life. There are temples in nearly every village. And people young and old still go to the temple to pray, listen to the sermons, and make merit.



A colourful parade of Dara-ang hilltribe people carry their offerings during the religious ceremony.

The Dara-ang have a motto: "Do not let religion die. Parents might die but the children must continue and keep religion alive."

No one knows exactly when Buddhism came to be an important part of the Dara-angs' way of life.

Geographically, the Dara-ang in Burma are near the Shan state inhabited by the Tai Yai people who are Buddhists.

Many of the traditions and ceremonies of the Dara-ang and Tai Yai are quite similar.

In addition, both Dara-ang and Tai Yai monks use the Lanna scriptures called Dharma Yon to perform their religious ceremonies.

Therefore, some conclude that Buddhism came to the Dara-ang via Chiang Mai or from the Tai Yai people in Chiang Tung where Buddhism dates back to ancient times.

The villagers normally finish all the preparations well in advance of the ceremony. The day before, many go to the temple for a retreat and listen to the monks' sermons.

While the older people pray, young men and women walk up the mountaintop temple to place Tung flags and Ton Krua Tan tree offerings. The women also dance and sing to welcome the rainy season along the journey.

During the festival, the path from the village to the temple is painted with vivid colors that match the Dara-ang costumes, earning them the nickname "Colors of the Mountain."

Upon reaching the temple, the marchers walk around the temple three times in a clockwise direction. Then, the big Tung is ceremonially erected in an empty space in front of the temple.

All villagers look up to the Tung swaying in the wind and are reminded of rice dancing in paddy fields when touched by a breeze. Their faces are covered in smiles with the belief that every one of them is now guaranteed a stairway to heaven after they die.

After the flag ceremony, the villagers walk around the temple once more before making their offerings to the monks.

The sounds of drums are soon replaced by the echoes of chanting and praying in the temple hall. The faithful take turns listening to the sermons which last them throughout the night.

At dawn the next day, cooking stoves are busy again as housewives prepare food to be offered to monks and the village's sacred spirits.

Later in the morning, religious ceremonies continue with meditation and scripture reading. After food is offered to the monks for lunch, the old people leave the retreat and go back home.

The sound of drums in the evening signifies the end of this part of the ceremony. But the celebration is not over yet for the young people.

They gather in the temple grounds under the full moon to *dance around the big Tung until* dawn.

The next day, life returns to normal—until the rain retreat festivities come around again next year. (Courtesy of Bangkok Post, Dec. 11, 1996.

(Courtesy of Bangkok Post,December 11, 1996.)

Travelogue

Tourist Sites and Cultural Relics in Chollabuk-do

MUJU AND CHONJU, the hosts of the 1997 Winter Universiade, are located in Chollabuk-do Province, whose people have long been known for their love of music, dance and art. The province is also famous for paper products such as fans, umbrellas, paper for paintaing and calligraphy and good food in general.

With the slogan "Youth in one place, the world in my heart," 2,000 university students from more than 50 countries will compete against each other in snow and on ice from January 24 to February 2, 1997 in this winter resort province.

Chollabuk-do is also blessed with many lovely mountains and other outstanding natural scenery such as the valleys of Mt. Togyusan. It is home to Mt. Chirisan National Park, the largest national park in Korea and one of the most popular destinations for Korean tourists. Besides its scenic beauty, Mr. Chirisan is famous for a number of Buddhist temples and hermitages located on its slopes. These include Hwaomsa, Songgwangsa, Korea's largest Buddhist monastery, Sonamsa, and Shilsangsa.

Chongju is well-known as a city of elegant taste—both in food and art. It is the home of the Yi Dynasty which ruled Korea under the name of the Choson Kingdom from 1392 to 1910 and boasts many cultural relics. The Kyo-dong district, in particular, has many traditional houses with tiled roofs for which it has been designated a "heritage preservation area."

In the center of the Nammun Market stands the P'ungnam Gate, one of the four gates of a wall that once surrounded the city. Built in 1389, it is the only remaining gate.

At the city's traditonal crafts center, various traditional handicraft items are sold including Chonju's famous fans. Hand fans from Chonju were famous even during the Joryo Dynasty (918-1392) and were usually included in offerings to the king and tribute to China.



Mt. Tokyusan of Muju is where the ski events of the 1977 winter Universiade will be held.

Chonju is also known for its food. Most of the restaurants offer more than a dozen sidedishes. Chonju's most famous dishes include pibimpap (rice mixed with various vegetables) and kongnamulgukpap (a rice and sprout soup). The pibimpap of the Hankukkwan and Songmidang restaurants are especially famous; their secret lies in their sauce and use of fresh, raw beef.

About halfway between Chonju and Muju is Maisan (Horse Ears Mountain), so called because it is shaped like a horse's ears. One can see dozens of stone pagodas at Unsusa Temple as well as water that freezes from the top down. Maisan is where, while praying for 100-days, Yi Song-gye, the founder of the Yi Dynasty of Choson, received a sign that he would become a king.

Muju, the site of the skiing competitions, is famous for Mt. Tokyusan and the Kuch'ondong Falls. In winter, the snow-covered Tokyusan looks like a frosty castle.

Chollabuk-do Province, which is known as the home of Korea's traditional culture, is just the right place to visit and see Korea's unique culture and winter sports.

(Courtesy of *Seoul*, Dec. 1996.)







TODAY IN HISTORY

1979 — Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi flees Iran after new civilian government is approved in Parliament.

1987 — Hu Yaobang resigns as head of China's Communist Party, accepting blame for policy mistakes stemming from student turmoil.

1990 — Bulgarian government grants opposition right to publish newspapers, but continues to deny their access to radio and television.

1991 — U.S. and UN allies launch airstrikes against targets in Iraq and Kuwait 19 hours after UN deadline, using fighters and heavy bombers. Attack is deemed successful by U.S., and undetermined military and industrial targets are reported destroyed.

1992 — Two PLO leaders are martyred.

1993 — Somali civilians lead U.S. troops to bunkers overflowin with more than 1,000 tons of arms and ammunation.

1994 — First Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, the architect of Russia's market reforms, announces he is leaving Boris Yeltsin's government because its recent decisions threaten the course of reforms.

TOMORROW IN HISTORY

1945 – Soviet troops and Polish patriot forces liberate Warsaw, more than five years after it fell to Nazi Germany in World War II.

1959 – Federal state of Mali is formed by union of republics of Senegal and French Sudan.

1967 – Indonesia's Foreign Minister Adam Malik tells President Sukarno to resign or face alternative of being brought down in dishonor.

1988 – Iran says revolutionary guards launched offensive against Iraqi forces in northern mountains of Kurdistan.

1990 – Medellin Cartel says it has lost drug war and offers skeptical U.S. and Colombian authorities an end of terror in exchange for pardon.

1991 – Second and third air strikes against targets in Iraq and Kuwait are launched – at least six Iraqi SCUD missiles are launched at Tel Aviv, Israel, and three explode in that city – White House calls on Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait in exchange for end to hostilities.

1992 – Israel begins enforcing a sweeping curfew on Palestinians from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip.

Short Story

Cherry Ripe

By John Moore

You would have thought there was a considerable skirmish going on at the bottom of the village. Old soldiers drinking in the pub pricked up their ears and said Ha ha! like Job's war-horse. One of them was reminded of the snipers who had so narrowly missed him before Arras; a sudden brisk fusillade jogged another's memory with recollections of the Battle of the Marne; a dull boom which sounded like cannon set the younger men talking about Cassino and Alamein. Even George Jenks, who is seventy-five, pulled up his sleeve as if he were one Henry's veterans on Saint Crispin's Day and proudly showed the wound he had got at Ladysmith. And meanwhile, Mr. Parker and Miss Philpotts, who own adjacent orchards, strove to keep the birds off their cherries.

Both had a bumper crop, and both were notably avaricious; they grudged even the smallest tomtit his pitiful tithe. Moreover, cherries were fetching a record price, but it would be a week at least before theirs were ready for picking. So all day long the noise of battle rolled — and the next day, and the next — until Mr. Parker and Miss philpotts became nearly worn out with their vigil. For the Untiring birds were early risers and late diners. A host of clattering jackdaws took off from the church steeple to make the first dawn raid at about 4.30 a.m., and the blackbirds were still sitting over their dessert at half-past eleven in the evening. You might have supposed, therefore, that the exhausted neighbors would have taken turns at their sentry-go, sharing the nineteen-hours' vigil between them; but unfortunately they could come to no such agreement, because they held completely different views about how the birds should be frightened away.

Mr. Parker's method was to fire his ancient, rusty twelve-bore indiscriminately into the trees. To blazes with the Wild Birds' Protection Act, said Mr. Parker, why don't the billy-mugginses in Parliament pass and Act to protect my cherries? And indeed his cherries did seem in need of protection, not so much from the birds as from Mr. Parker himself; who-ever ultimately ate them would surely break his teeth on lead pellets. Luckily for the birds, Mr. Parker's shooting was erratic; anger and old age between them unsteadied his aim. Now and then, however, a small soft bundle of feathers came tumbling down with the cherries and twigs and leaves. It might be a tit or a bullfinch or even a spotted woodpecker, for all birds were thieves in Mr. Parker's opinion, and if you protested against the unselective slaughter he answered soundly with a sonorous word which he had got out of the encyclopaedia: 'What do you think I am, a hopping hornithologist?' The chaffinch on the cherry's limb A blasted chaffinch was to him and it was nothing more.

But Miss Philpotts, who is a retired schoolteacher, was troubled by humanitarian principles. She had taught small children for fifty years that Everything Had Been Put into the World with a Purpose, even wasps and earwigs, cockroaches and slugs. She clung bravely to this faith even when a flock of gluttonous starlings descended upon her trees, and although she possessed a gun, which had belonged to her brother, she fired it as a last resort and then only 'into the air'; that is to say, 'In any direction other than towards the birds.' In the main she relied on the erection of scarecrows, on shouting at the birds in a monitory voice, on the rattling of clappers and the beating of tin-cans, and on the letting off of huge maroons which she bought from the ironmongers. It was these which startled the village every hour or two with a deep boom like cannon.

Alas, the birds took very little notice of her devices. They perched happily on the scarecrows (which were cut out of pasteboard in the likeness of tenuous, two-dimensional cats), they soon came to regard the tin-cans in the nature of gongs calling them to dinner, and the maroons, which exploded so violently that one of them burned off Miss Philpotts's eyebrows, merely caused them to flutter from one bunch of cherries to the next. Poor Miss Philpotts went distractedly between the trees, clapping her hands till they tingled and addressing the bloated flocks as if they were schoolchildren: 'Now fly away, you naughty birds, you'll give yourselves tummyaches, *go away!*'

By mid-week the tempers of both cherry-minders had become considerably frayed; and no wonder, for they gobbled their meals so hurriedly that they gave themselves indigestion, the appalling row which they made in the orchards began to get on their nerves, and their short night's sleep was troubled by dreams in which the sky was darkened by the sable wings of enormous fructivores. Miss Philpotts complained that Mr. Parker's gunfire gave her a splitting headache, and Mr. Parker discovered in Miss Philpotts's voice the likeness of an intolerable caterwauling. They had a always been bad neighbors and were both notoriously argumentative, for Mr. Parker read popular philosophical tracts and constituted himself a know-all whereas Miss Philpotts believed everything which she had taught to the school-children during fifty years. Often they would wrangle illnaturedly for hours across their boundary fence over such subjects as the Literal Truth of the Book of Genesis. But now that they were tired out, irritable and, moreover, fully armed, their disagreement was bound to take on a more personal aspect sooner or later; and it did so on the morning of their fourth day's vigil, when Miss Philpotts let off her gun 'into the air' but unfortunately canted it at an angle which sent the pellets showering down upon Mr. Parker's head. He marched up to the boundary fence and demanded an explanation.

'I was only shooting it in the air,' said Miss Philpotts defensively.

'That's as may be,' said Mr. Parker, 'but there's air all round you, isn't there?'

Miss Philpotts admitted that this was true.

'And there's air all round me,' went on Mr. Parker, whose argumentative style bore some faint resemblance to that of Socrates, 'otherwise I'd be dead of suffocation, wouldn't I?'

'A good job too,' said Miss Philpotts unsocratically.

Mr. Parker ignored this and continued his labyrinthine search for truth.

'So you'll agree that if you shoot "into the air" and it happens to be my air, you're shooting at me?'

The dialectical method was unfamiliar to Miss Philpotts, but she was not lacking in tactical sense and she fell back instinctively upon that last refuge and impregnable fortress to which philosophers retire when they want to gain time and collect their wits.

'What exactly do you mean by *your* air?' she said. 'The air's free, isn't it?'

'My air is where I am,' propounded Mr. Parker, and for nearly half an hour they continued this extraordinary metaphysical argument, while the thrushes stripped the cherry twigs methodically branch by branch.

Worn out by intellectual acrobatics, they returned at last to their stations, but towards evening a second crisis occurred. Mr. Parker let off his gun at random into a tree near the edge of the orchard, and by ill-chance mortally wounded a white bird with a yellow bill which fluttered painfully across the boundary. Miss Philpotts happened to be standing there beating her tin-can like a drum major, the bird flopped tragically at her feet and promptly died. Mr. Parker, who had never before seen a white bird with a yellow bill, walked across to the boundary to satisfy his curiosity, and when he got there Miss Philpotts from behind the fence rose up in fury before him, holding the limp body in her hands.

'Now you have done it,' she reproached him between sobs of pity and rage.

'Done what?' hedged Mr. Parker.

'You've killed a white blackbird,' accused Miss Philpotts.

'A what?'

'A white blackbird.'

'There is no such creature,' said Mr. Parker dogmatically.

'How can you stand there and say there is no such creature, when you see the plain evidence pouring out its life-blood before your eyes —' and she stroked out the tousled feathers on the poor bird's immaculate breast.

'I can see no such thing. I can see a white bird,' said Mr. parker in his maddeningly pedantic way, 'but even you can't make me believe that black is white and vice versa, and if it's white it can't be black and therefore it isn't a blackbird.'

'Isn't it, Mister Know-all, isn't it?' said Miss Philpotts. 'Then let me tell you that a white blackbird is a freak or sport of nature, and a very great rarity, and this white blackbird was probably the only white blackbird for fifty miles. And now you've killed it.'

'How could I know,' said Mr. Parker reasonably, 'when I let off my gun at the tree that there was a Sport of Nature hiding in it?'

'I'll tell you what you are,' Miss Philpotts went on, 'you're not only a wicked ignorant man, you're a cruel monster, and you're exactly like the Ancient Mariner who shot the Albatross. Now I come to think of it, you've got a nasty glittering eye just like he had; and I shouldn't be surprised if what you've done brings you bad luck for the rest of your mortal life.'

As she continued to stroke the dead bird's breast a little trickle of blood welled up and stained its whiteness. Now Miss Philpotts had often declared that the sight of blood made her feel faint, but the spectacle of this innocent blood, crimson upon the snowy feathers, had a completely different and most surprising effect, for she suddenly drew up her dumpy figure to its full height and for all the world like a knight of old throwing down the gauntlet she uttered her terrible threat and ultimatum:

'Mr. Parker: I can use a gun myself as you well know, and I swear to you that if you fire at the birds again I *shall shoot to kill!*'

Mr. Parker stared at her, speechless with astonishment.

'And I don't care,' added Miss Philpotts between sobs, 'if I hang for it.'

Mr. Parker shrugged his shoulders and shambled away. Hysteria, he said to himself: it was no use arguing with a hysterical woman. 'She'll soon get over it,' he thought; and he noticed through the corner of his eye that she was hurrying back towards her house, carrying the bird before her in cupped hands. 'Going to bury it,' hazarded Mr. Parker, 'like she buries her dogs and cats with silly tombstones over their graves.' And he let off both barrels at the nearest tree in a gesture of defiance. Nevertheless, he was a little disquieted a few minutes later when he saw Miss Philpotts coming back with a purposeful look on her face and the gun under her arm. There was no knowing what a hysterical woman might do, or any woman for that matter, and already — perhaps it hadn't been an accident after all? — she had showered him with pellets. So he edged over towards the far side of the orchard, and just to show that he didn't intend to be intimidated aimed his gun ostentatiously at a tree. Then he remembered a man he'd read about who had lost one of his eyes through being hit by a shot-gun pellet at more than a hundred yards, and he decided not to shoot. It was dusk already, and most of the birds had gone to roost. No doubt by tomorrow the absurd woman would have got over her tantrums.

But at dawn next day, when Mr. Parker returned to his orchard, Miss Philpotts was already on guard with her gun. He gave the boundary a wide berth, and took up his position against the far hedge, which the jackdaws usually crossed on their way from the church steeple to the cherry trees.

As he did so Mis Philpotts moved in what he was bound to admit was a rather menacing way towards the boundary fence.

The jackdaws arrived with their usual infuriating clatter, and Mr. Parker lifted his gun. So did Miss Philpotts. He stepped behind a tree and put his gun to his shoulder again, but Miss Philpotts swiftly changed her position as if to cover him. Mr. Parker lowered his gun and Miss Philpotts lowered hers.

At noon the old soldiers in the pub remarked on the unusual quietude. There hadn't been a single gun-shot all morning. No clappers, no tin-cans, no maroons. It reminded them, they said, of the queer, unnatural hush before the barrage which began the greater Easter offensive of 1917.

And down in the orchards, like chessmen moving from square to square in an interminable game, Mr. Parker and Miss Philpotts alternately took six paces to the left or to the right, raised their guns, lowered their guns, took six more paces, raised their guns, lowered their guns, in grim and deathly silence, while over their heads in the leafy boughs the glutted jackdaws pecked the berries in play and a host of smale fowles made melodye.

Tiger, Tiger

